CLASS MATTERS: THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN A GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATION

Helen-Grace Ryan

Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Indiana University

November 2009

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

Doctoral Committee:

_____
Dr. George Kuh, Chairperson and Director

_____
Dr. Vasti Torres

_____
Dr. Bruce Jacobs

_____
Dr. Sylvia Martinez

_____
Dr. Jillian Kinzie

_____
Dr. Don Hossler

Date of Oral Examination
March 2, 2009

For Patrick and Lucy Bea

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My doctoral study and this subsequent manuscript would not have been completed had it not been for my loving husband, Patrick. He supported me as I commuted two hours from our home in Louisville to Bloomington, Indiana, staying away from each other four nights a week for over two years. While our two golden retrievers, Lady and Damer Dog kept him great company during my nights away, I want to thank him for making that sacrifice. Absence indeed makes the heart grow fonder and I so appreciate when we both are home at night in the same city. I treasure our time together, his love, and support. I look forward to raising our daughter, Lucy Bea, with him, who was seven months in utero when I orally defended this work.

Dr. George Kuh, my academic advisor, teacher, former employer, and dissertation chair has been with me throughout my doctoral program of study and dissertation process. His prompt feedback, insightful contributions, and challenges have improved this study, my professional career, and me as a person. He asks everyone he works with to rise to the occasion. It was an honor and privilege to work with such a prolific, intelligent man.

I also want to acknowledge the other members of my wonderfully supportive dissertation committee. Having attended IU for my master's degree, I befriended IU faculty members Drs. Don Hossler, Jillian Kinzie, and Bruce Jacobs almost ten years ago. I want to thank them for their support, care, and instruction over the last decade. They have shaped me into the professional I am today. I came to know Dr. Vasti Torres when I returned to IU to complete my doctoral work. She has challenged me to better understand myself and others, serving as an invaluable sounding board and candid colleague. I also want to acknowledge Dr. Sylvia Martinez for her flexibility and providing a unique perspective to my work.

The Center for Postsecondary Research served as my home away from home while I completed my doctoral program. Chad Ahren, Rob Aaron, Dan Bureau, Lowell Davis, Ted Ingram, Amy Garver, Amanda Niskode-Dossett, Todd Chamberlain, Barbara Stewart, and Erin Whisler were my Indiana family while I was away from home. They graciously proofed papers, listened, made me laugh, provided feedback, gave me perspective, and improved my scholarly endeavors. It was a blessing to work in such a cerebral assistantship site with such distinguished colleagues.

I was truly blessed to gain employment at Bellarmine University the day after I defended my qualifying exams. My colleagues there have been such a help as I conducted my research and defended this manuscript. Drs. Gale and Fred Rhodes could not be better colleagues and friends. Dr. Jay McGowan, Dr. Carole Pfeffer, Melanie Evans, Dr. Hannah Clayborne, Beth Davis, and Leslie-Maxie Ashford all played a role in supporting me as I completed this work and transitioned from student to professional to working mother.

I would be remiss is I did not also acknowledge Ms. Jaqueline Terrell, who I lived with during the weekdays I was in Bloomington. She generously allowed me to sublet a room in her apartment for the two years I attended classes. It was such an education living with her and a blessing that I found such a wonderful place to live while I completed classes.

I would like to acknowledge my family and friends. My late grandmother, a rural high school math teacher, instilled in me the importance of education saying, “you can either work with your hands or your head.” I think this would make her proud. My mother, a musician, taught me the importance of cultural and social capital while my father, a small business owner, instilled in me the impact of economic resources. I also want to thank my many sorority sisters who inspired me to conduct this study and supported me more than they

will ever know. Melanie Ballard Sewell, Cathy Phillips, and Selena Cauley Rock were steadfast in their friendship as were my sorority sisters who participated in this study. They taught me the importance of being womanly always and discouraged never.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank God by whom I am truly blessed.

ABSTRACT

Helen Grace Ryan

CLASS MATTERS: THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN A GREEK LETTER ORGANIZATION

This qualitative study documents the experiences of 15 women from different social class backgrounds who are members of a women's fraternity/sorority at a large, public, institution located in an urban area in the Mid-West. The purpose of the study was to better understand the relationship between social class and the nature and impact of the sorority experience as interpreted by the women themselves. The main research questions were: a) Do the experiences of women participating in self-perpetuating student organizations vary depending on their social class? b) What does social class mean to the students? For example, are traditional markers of class such as high levels of family income, parental education, and appreciation for such aesthetic qualities as fine art and cuisine understood and valued by these women? Or are other indicators such as students' consumption patterns more meaningful? c) Does this self-perpetuating student organization confer social and/or cultural capital to its members? d) Does social class affect what they do and think about themselves and others?

Major findings include: the women participants did not consider social class or social status to be a significant factor in terms of the nature or quality of their experiences with this organization or that of other women in the Greek organization. Membership in the organization was found to perpetuate social class standing and social class reproduction, and provide social insulation within the larger campus community. Members also described numerous opportunities to gain social capital through membership while cultural capital was

not indicated as a benefit. The women interpreted social class through material goods and could articulate the experiences of upper and upper-middle class students while experiences of other students for lower economic echelons were invisible. Other findings include the following: the chapter was not diverse from an economic standpoint, with less than 10% of the chapter coming from lower middle or middle class backgrounds; participation in the Greek letter organization perpetuates social class; membership insulates the women from other, more diverse students on campus, and that the women are unaware of the privilege they have as members of the upper and upper-middle class. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACCEPTANCE FORM ..... **II**

COPYRIGHT ..... **III**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **V**

ABSTRACT ..... **VIII**

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY **1**

STRATIFICATION IN EDUCATION 2
HISTORY OF POST-SECONDARY ACCESS FROM A SOCIOECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE 4
KEY TERMS 11
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM 13
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS 17
SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY 18
STUDY OVERVIEW AND ORGANIZATION OF PROPOSAL 20

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW **21**

SOCIAL CLASS 21
Forms of Capital *24*
Positive and Negative Forms of Social Capital *28*
Functions of Social Capital *32*
Measurement of Social Class *33*
Describing Class *35*
Models *36*
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL CLASS 40
Social Capital, Participation in College and Student Organizations *41*
Greek Organization. 42
The Recruitment Process. 43
Sifting and Sorting. 46

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY **49**

RESEARCH DESIGN 49
Selecting a Study Site *50*
Sample Selection *52*
Study Information Sheet *54*
Interviews *56*
Observations *57*
Journal Activity *58*
Document Analysis *59*
DATA ANALYSIS 60
REPORTING RESULTS 62
TRUSTWORTHINESS 62
POSITIONALITY 64
CONCLUSION 66

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS 67

THE CHAPTER MEMBERS AND HOUSE 68
THE CHAPTER FROM A SOCIAL CLASS PERSPECTIVE 70
THE CHAPTER HOUSE 74
ECONOMIC CAPITAL 77
Recruitment 77
Presentation 80
Costs 82
SOCIAL CAPITAL 89
Friendships 91
Campus Connections and Navigation 99
Academic Support 102
Alumnae Mentoring 103
CULTURAL CAPITAL 104
THE SORORITY AS A SOCIAL REPRODUCTION SITE 107
Being Classy & Rho Beta Material 110
Being Polite 112
DEFINING SOCIAL CLASS 113
CONCLUSION 117

CHAPTER FIVE : SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 120

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY 120
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 129
Definition of Terms 130
Interview Protocol 130
Sampling Procedures 130
Interactions with Participants 131
CONCLUSIONS 131
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 134
Suggestions for Practice 135
Suggestions for Future Research 140
REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL CLASS REPRODUCTION AND THE ROLE OF RHO BETA 141
LAST WORDS 143

REFERENCES 145

APPENDIX A: STUDY INFORMATION SHEET 155

APPENDIX B:HOLLINGSHEAD INDEX SCORES FOR PARTICIPANTS 159

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL I 160

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR CHAPTER ADVISOR & GREEK ADVISOR 164

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PANHELLENIC COUNCIL MEMBERS 165

APPENDIX F:INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PRESIDENT 166

APPENDIX G: EXAMPLE OF OBSERVATIONAL DATA FROM A CHAPTER MEETING 167

APPENDIX H: JOURNAL ACTIVITY 174

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW CODES & THEMES 175

APPENDIX J: OUTLINE OF THEMES WITHIN THE DATA 187

APPENDIX K: DATA RESOURCES 190

APPENDIX L: PROFILES OF 14 PARTICIPANTS & CHAPTER PRESIDENT 191

APPENDIX M: PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS NOT SELECTED FOR INTERVIEWS 192

APPENDIX N: DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL CLASS PROVIDED BY MEMBERS (STRATIFIED BY SOCIAL CLASS) 193

APPENDIX O: COSTS OF MEMBERSHIP (STRATIFIED BY SOCIAL CLASS) .. 194

APPENDIX P: BENEFITS OF CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP (STRATIFIED BY SOCIAL CLASS) 195

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Higher education is often viewed as a means for social mobility. Some individuals even go so far as to refer to education as the great equalizer (McIlveen, 2001), in that it is one of the few vehicles individuals from lower income groups use to improve their circumstance. To realize the American Dream, individuals from various social classes participate in higher education to advance or reproduce their social status and lifestyle (Bourdieu, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Rudolph, 1990; Ryan & Sackrey, 1984). Obtaining a bachelor's degree is the most important step a person can take to move up the economic ladder (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini). Having a college degree usually results in a more desirable, stable job and a 20-40% increase in earnings (Pascarella & Terenzini). Individuals may increase or maintain their social standing by attending elite academic institutions or completing academic programs promising economic rewards and prestige (Rudolph).

During college, one way students can maintain or improve their social standing or popularity among peers is to participate in a student organization (Kendall, 2002). For instance, in Kendall's study of upper-class women who participated in community groups like Junior League, many of the women recalled joining sororities in order to enter desired social circles. The daughters of these women went on to join sororities as well. With their college experiences behind them, the mothers encouraged their daughters' participation in not just sorority life, but in getting into the most select sororities.

While sociologists have examined social class within academe, the nexus of social class and co-curricular involvement remains understudied by higher education scholars

(Walpole, 1998). More can and should be done to understand college students' experiences using a social class perspective (Duff, 2007; Rehm, 1998; Stuber 2006; Vander Putten, 2001; Walpole; Wimberly, 2000).

Toward this end, this study will examine the experiences of college students participating in a student organization from a social class perspective. More specifically, the study will focus on a more selective female student organization, a Greek-letter women's organization.

To establish warrant for this study, an overview of stratification within education is provided, followed by a brief history of access within higher education. Then, an explanation of key sociological terms used in this study will be offered followed by the statement of the problem to be studied and research questions. The chapter concludes with an explanation of why the study is significant and an overview of the rest of the dissertation.

Stratification in Education

Many sociologists use status attainment models to examine the effect of education on personal economic success. They do this by comparing college-educated individuals' income, or social class, with that of their parents. Such studies often end with mixed results (Walpole, 1998). Many sociologists would argue that education is a vehicle to the American Dream. For instance, a landmark study conducted by Blau and Duncan found that education has a significant impact on personal upward mobility (1967). The same study also supports the idea that social class at birth does not uniformly predict social class during adulthood.

However, some would argue that education may have a negative stratifying effect. One of the more substantial studies of this kind is Bowles and Gintis' work in which they

argue education serves to perpetuate or reproduce social inequality (1976; 2002). In their meta-analysis of educational economic studies, Bowles and Gintis argue that given all the educational expansion that occurred in the 1970s, social reproduction through education is still a problem within the United States. They found that a father's socio-economic status (SES) was a highest predictor of a person's future occupational earnings more so than any other individual characteristic. While the focus of their argument was primary and secondary education, they posit that schooling has a very moderate effect on future success. They go so far as to argue that education actually perpetuates classism. More specifically, working class children receive a much different education than other children, not necessarily worse, but very different (Bowles & Gintis; Lucas, 2001). This, in turn effects how these individuals think, problem solve, and interact with others. Their more recent work in 2002 supports this idea as well.

Understanding how people make sense of and experience social class is pivotal to understanding how social inequalities get reproduced (Stuber, 2007). Schools are a place where individuals learn about roles and develop their identities about race, gender, and class (Stuber). Unfortunately, the socialization process that occurs at colleges is a "black box" with very little information on the extent to which the stratification process plays out in higher education. As Stuber points out, college students are particularly important to study since they are the future "gate keepers" of society (p. 25). Status attainment models illustrate that family SES and educational experience may both play a very important role in an individual's social mobility. Bourdieu's (1987) work is seminal in the research on status attainment and social class. He uses such terms as cultural and social capital, which will be more thoroughly described later in this chapter, to explain this phenomenon.

History of Post-Secondary Access from a Socioeconomic Perspective

The importance of social class and its relationship to higher education is represented by the struggles those from working and lower class backgrounds face in attending postsecondary institutions. To illustrate, a brief history of access to postsecondary institutions is provided from a socioeconomic standpoint. This historical overview provides a current snapshot of the students attending higher education institutions from a social class perspective, progress in this area, and issues to be addressed for improvement.

Though individuals from lower or working class backgrounds have attended institutions of higher education since its beginnings, the majority of those who went to college came from the more socially elite and financially well-established (Karabel, 2005; Rudolph, 1990). During the Revolutionary War, the spirit of democratic ideals were embraced and embedded in American culture. While the democratic and revolutionary movements did not have an immediate impact on higher education, both forces began to emphasize the importance of educational access. Forty years after the Revolutionary War, the Jacksonian democratic movement re-invigorated the idea that higher education is intended for every citizen, not just the financially well-to-do. As such, higher education participants slowly began to include the working class, racial minorities, and women. As Rudolph writes, "Jacksonian democracy was a war on privilege, artificial, and accidental advantage" (p. 202). While these changes were not substantial in terms of increased access, Jacksonian democracy emphasized the importance of educational access from an economic perspective.

Though not rapidly imitated at first, another step in increasing access was coeducation, as it expanded society's thoughts about who was qualified to attend college. In 1837 Oberlin College became the first postsecondary institution to admit women as well as

men (Rudolph, 1990). This event gave way to the idea that higher education was not just for men, opening people's minds as to who was qualified to attend postsecondary institutions and the different purposes higher education could serve. Institutions which were opened to serve students from lower-income groups also had a similar effect. In 1850, the Cooper Institute, a privately funded institution in New York, was established with the mission to educate poor children in "practical matters," tuition-free (Rudolph, p. 180). Seventeen years after Oberlin admitted women, City College of New York (CCNY) was created for students from low-income families, offering a tuition-free education until the 1970s. In the 1970s the institution began gradually to increase tuition due to financial pressures from the mayor and Governor, as the city of New York was in financial dire straits.

Governmental regulations and acts largely influenced access as well. In 1862, the Morrill Land-Grant Act passed. The Morrill Act was the first major instance of the federal government's involvement in higher education. Rudolph insists the Morrill Act probably did the most to change the outlook of the American people toward college-going (1990). Morrill wrote in 1848 that his intention for the bill was to "promote liberal and practical education of the industrial classes," and for postsecondary education to be more economically inclusive (Rudolph, p. 249). The curriculum of the land-grant colleges emphasized the study of agriculture and science versus the more traditional bourgeois classical studies (Rudolph; Williams, 1991).With the Land Grant Act, each state was given public lands equal to 30,000 acres for each senator and representative under appointment in 1860 (Rudolph). Any land-grant university also received proceeds for the sale of any of its appropriated land. A second Morrill Act passed in 1890, providing for regular annual appropriations for institutions that would not deny admission on the basis of race, unless separate but equal facilities existed.

Ten years after the second Morrill Act, the first land-grant foundation opened and began to change the purpose of the land-grant institution, from being agriculturally centered to providing a more liberal education. The initial tendency of the land-grant institution was to employ more practical studies and stray away from classical studies, though each institution structured its curriculum a bit differently. By the 1890s, the land grant colleges legitimately and successfully functioned throughout the United States with a curriculum that met a plethora of student academic interests (Rudolph, 1990). In the end, the land-grant college incorporated the goals and objectives of the Jacksonian ideal. After that point in time, farm children from low socioeconomic backgrounds began to utilize college as a means to escape the farm (Rudolph).

As a result of the Morrill Act, some of the first Historically Black Colleges (HBCUs) were founded in the late 1800s, increasing access again to the lower social class. The first black colleges were established during the mid-1800s in the north by religiously-affiliated groups. Colleges in the south were established roughly twenty years later. Some argue the initial quality of education was less than desired in many of the first HBCUs because they were focused on meeting the needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged (Lucas, 1994). Throughout their establishment, arguments over the most appropriate curriculum ensued. For instance, some held that black colleges should educate the future black doctors and lawyers through liberal studies; while others argued that a more technical training should be included. However, most supporters of black colleges shared a belief in the power of education as a means to promote newly emancipated black citizens into mainstream society.

Several decades later GI Bill, or Serviceman's Readjustment Act, passed in 1944. The bill guaranteed military personnel "a year of education for 90 days service, plus one month

for each month of active duty and supplies of up to $500 a year" (Keister, as cited in Thelin, 2004, p. 263). The GI Bill provided a way for individuals who never had the opportunity to attend college to do so (Ford & Miller, 1995). However, its true intent was to provide a means for millions of returning soldiers to become educated and trained for jobs in a lackluster economy, and to provide time for American industry to readjust to thousands of men returning home from war. As a result, veterans and their families inundated college campuses, changing the face of higher education, and furthering the idea of the importance of access to higher education.

Another great advance in access came during that time. In 1946, President Truman established the President's Commission on Higher Education, otherwise known as the Truman Commission. In 1947, the Truman Commission published the Higher Education for American Democracy Report, or the Truman Report, as the first major United States (US) government publication to mention treatment on the basis of race in education (A. Walton, personal communication, November 29, 2005). The Commission's position was that for many American citizens, the opportunity to attend college relied as much on ability as it did on one's race or family background.

The Commission made six recommendations as a means to move toward universal access to higher education, including a reduced tuition pricing structure for postsecondary education, free education through grade 14, and the establishment of a state system of community colleges that would be of little or no cost (Bounds, 2005). Community colleges were established as a means of providing postsecondary education access locally, allowing students to transfer into four-year institutions after completing two years of college

coursework closer to home. With substantial growth occurring in the following decades, today's community colleges enroll more than 5.7 million students.

Then, twenty years later came the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the 1972 amendment to that act (Duff, 2007). These acts introduced and increased need-based aid in many states. Until the 1920s, college tuition was relatively stable and inexpensive. In the 1930s, it began to rise. During this time, the federal government provided financial relief as part of the Federal Employment Relief Act. In the late 1930s, Harvard began awarding financial scholarships based on need (Thelin, 2004). It was not until the 1970s that the federal government began offering grants to students. The Basic Educational Opportunities Grant, renamed the Pell Grant, covered a student's tuition given full-time status, good academic standing, and enrollment at an accredited institution. Also a part of the act were programs such as Upward Bound and Talent Search, established to outreach, counsel, and support at-risk students, many of whom were low-income. A similar program, GEARUP, targeted towards middle-school students, began in the late 1990s (Gladieux & Swail, 2000). As financial support increased, different types of colleges began to emerge to meet the demand for students. For example, large urban commuter campuses sprouted up, allowing individuals from urban areas to attend college (Bonner, 1986).

During that same period of time the civil rights movement and efforts of affirmative action increased access to higher education to traditionally underrepresented students. However, Newman (2000) suggests that affirmative action made strides toward universal access for students traditionally underrepresented in terms of race, but not social class. In the 1960s, affirmative action did not necessarily serve students from economically oppressed backgrounds, but typically assisted middle-class African Americans (Kahlenburg, 1997).

Overall, though, admission to colleges became more accessible to a diverse pool of potential participants.

More recently, some of the more prestigious colleges within the United States use socio-economic status (SES) as a factor in ensuring access through the admissions process. This is due to the fact that students from low-income backgrounds do not typically enroll in prestigious post-secondary institutions. In their quantitative study of 19 selective colleges, Bowen, Kurzweil, and Turbin (2005) found that students from families in the bottom quartile of income are only one-sixth as likely to be admitted to more prestigious institutions when compared to students in the top income quartile. Researchers have also found that while students from low-income families are not necessarily discriminated against in the admissions process, they receive no preferential treatment, which is not true for upper-class families (Gose, 2005). Some more prestigious institutions, including Harvard and the University of Virginia, identify students from low-income families during the admissions process. Ironically, the universities use tactics similar to those that some colleges have used for a decade or more to single out higher SES students who could increase tuition revenue. For instance, Harvard is using estimations of family income by ZIP code as a means to identify high-school juniors from low-income families who might be eligible for admission. Last year the University contacted over 12,000 students whom they identified as low-income to encourage these students to apply. The importance of considering the impact of SES on college students' college attendance patterns is increasing.

Today, the type of students attending college is more diverse than ever. More women are attending college than men, and more students from underrepresented groups are attending college altogether (Kuh et al., 2006). However, from a socioeconomic perspective,

the outlook for students' access to higher education has a long way to go. More state-supported flagship institutions are admitting students mainly from higher SES backgrounds (Mortenson, 2005, as cited in Kuh et al.); while lower income students are more likely enroll in a community college. Ideally, attending a community college would serve as a bridge to a baccalaureate degree; however that is not always the case. Full-time enrollment at a community college increases students' odds of earning a baccalaureate degree when compared to students who never enroll in postsecondary education, but students who initially enroll at a four-year institution are more likely to graduate compared with their counterparts who start at a two-year college (Kuh et al.). If the transfer rates to four-year institutions were higher, this would not be a problem (NCES, 2006).

The income level gaps between those who do and do not attend college are as wide today as they were thirty years ago (Gladieux & Swail, 1998). SES, while not a replacement for race-based or gender-based admissions decisions, is something that should be considered more widely in making admissions decisions. Most policymakers and educators agree that many students from lower social class backgrounds are disadvantaged. For example, students from lower social class backgrounds may not have the means to take college examination prep courses or attend high schools that offer a plethora of advanced placement class opportunities. Additionally, given that the parents of many lower-income students have not experienced college and the college application process, support from home is different when compared to upper-class students. This factor, among others, impacts whether a student will enroll in and then go on to complete college (Kuh, 2007; Walpole, 1998). Students from lower-income groups are not persisting through the educational pipeline. One third of dependent students attending private institutions are from families with combined incomes of

$100,000 or greater, roughly 10% more students than those attending public four-year doctorate granting institutions. Only sixteen percent of students attending public two-year institutions come from this income group.

If a student from a lower-income group makes it to a four-year institution, group membership in certain campus subcultures may appear to be relatively open. However, in practice minority students may see them an unwelcoming (Cuyjet, 1997). As Stuber (2006) found in her study of 61 college students, many of the working-class students felt alienated. For example, one working-class student said he does not necessarily fit in with the majority of his white peers. He has thoughts of hanging out with black students, but he did not do so because he is not black. So he is stuck in between cultures. He did not necessarily fit in with the middle and upper-middle class peers, but he cannot identify another group with whom he would feel a part. Students coming from low income family backgrounds can experience similar conflicts and challenges since academic preparation, high aspirations, and support are easier to come by if a family is from a higher socioeconomic status (Kuh et al., 2006). Since higher education is both an engine of economic growth and serves to equalize individuals' chances of success, more must be done to increase access and better understand the experiences of students from a social class perspective.

Key Terms

S*ocial class, social capital, economic capital and cultural capital* are some of the terms related to discussing the role of SES and educational attainment. Many sociological terms are used in this report and need to be explained in order to clarify the problem this

study addresses. While a more detailed description of all the subsequent terms is included in the literature review, a brief overview will be provided at this point.

For this research, *social class* is defined as the type and amount of economic, social and cultural capital a person possesses both objectively and subjectively (Bourdieu, 1987). The construct of social class is informed using both Lareau's and Bourdieu's social class frameworks. Bourdieu (1983) uses an individual's level of social, cultural, and economic capital to define social class. Lareau (2003) expands upon Bourdieu's definitions of social, cultural and economic capital, adding a more current refinement that is also more applicable to American culture.

Cultural capital is the "institutionalized attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials used for social and cultural exclusion" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 156). *Economic capital* refers to property, capital, and financial wealth a family or individual possesses (Bourdieu, 1987). For instance, savings account holdings, stocks, bonds, and property are all forms of economic capital. Economic capital is tangible financial wealth. *Social capital* is the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social constructs (Portes, 1998). For instance, getting a job interview through a neighbor or through someone who attends the same civic group are forms of social capital. Social class is shaped in part by a combination of these three forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1983, 1987; Coleman, 1988; Lareau, 2003). Now that a brief introduction to the construct of social class has been provided, an overview of the study is provided next.

Statement of Problem

While including social class in analyzing participation in higher education is gaining momentum (Bowen, Kurzweil & Tobin, 2005; Gose, 2005), relatively few studies incorporate a social class perspective as noted earlier (Vander Putten, 2001; Walpole, 1998). Specifically, very few researchers have examined the nexus of social class and students' co-curricular experiences (Duff, 2007; Stuber, 2006; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1999; Vander Putten; Walpole, 1998, 2003). Instead, the focus of research has been on SES and student retention and college selection (Ostrove & Long, 2007). For example, some researchers examine how social class relates to college selection (Hossler & Bean, 1990; Levine & Nidiffer, 1996; McDonough, 1997; Terenzini, Cabrera, & Bernal, 2001) while others utilize social class as a means to explain persistence (Berger, 2002; Kuh & Love, 2002). Still others use social class to better comprehend classroom academic performance (Brodnick & Ress, 1995; hooks, 1994) and even graduate school participation (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985). In higher education, college access and experiences from college are most often studied from a gender or race standpoint, but not social class (Karabel, 2005; Vander Putten). For example, in a brief educational database search using the search engine EBSCO, the number of articles returned using *race* and *higher education* as key terms resulted in 4,000 articles compared to the 100 articles found using *socio-economic status* and *higher education* as search terms. Studying education from a social class standpoint also tells an important story because it provides insight into the lives of students who may be marginalized; given higher education is typically a middle or upper-middle class experience.

Feelings of marginalization are important to study as they can negatively impact college students' academic success and persistence. In Schlossberg's work in the 1980s, she

purported that students can often feel marginalized on a college campus, meaning they feel as though they do not fit in academically or socially. Oppositely, other students may feel as though they matter. Schlossberg defines mattering as the experience of others depending on us, being interested in us, and being concerned with our fate (Dixon Rayle & Chung, 2007; Schlossberg, 1989). As students feel marginalized they become more self-conscious, less able to handle academic stress, and ultimately do not perform up to their capabilities (Sand, Robinson, Kurpius, & Dixon Rayle, 2005). The social support of friends increases students' feelings of mattering (Dixon Rayle & Chung). Schlossberg argues that during the college transition mattering is one of the elements that can help a student persist, particularly beyond the all important first year.

The concept of social and cultural capital as outcomes of education has received some attention within the field of sociology, psychology, and economics. However, researchers within the field of higher education typically use social capital to explain events such as the college choice process and educational attainment. Coleman (1988) and others examine how education provides individuals with social capital, but the research is focused on K-12 education. Little research exists as to how formal student organizations provide their members with social and cultural capital.

As Stuber (2007) suggests, it is increasingly important that scholars focus on the extent to which stratifying processes take place *on* college campuses. One setting in which individuals may feel the effects of stratification by social class is within the co-curriculum. The co- curriculum is the out-of-class social, cultural, and intellectual activities that enhance academic experiences, including internships, service learning, and clubs and organizations. The co- curricular experience is important to study from a social class perspective because it

serves as a site in which students may gain access to the kinds of social and cultural resources that are valued by the dominant classes. Co-curricular activities are important because they allow students to utilize existing social and cultural skills, while also offering the opportunity to acquire new skills. In this way, participation on the co- and extra-curriculum may be related to stratification processes within college life.

As Olivas (1997) explains, student affairs training and education often lump racial and ethnic minorities in with students from the lower social class. Therefore, professionals working with students outside of the classroom and conducting higher education research are most likely unaware of effects of social class on students, and therefore unlikely to write about and research the topic. As Woodard, Love, and Komives (2000) argue, most of the writing and focus within the field of student affairs "betrays an underlying and subconscious assumption that the typical college student is a traditionally-aged, full-time, middle-class undergraduate living on campus or at home" (p. 35). One area that could especially increase the understanding of education from a diversity standpoint is social class and its relationship with students' experiences (Duff, 2007; hooks, 2000; Ostrove, 2003; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Rehm, 1998; Terenzini, et al., 1999; Vander Putten, 2001; Walpole, 2003).

The nexus of social class and co-curricular experiences is important to study for several reasons, many leading to persistence. Student involvement is strongly associated with *persistence* in higher education (Pascarella & Terenzini 2005; Tinto 1987). Participation in co-curricular experiences enhances engagement in college and in turn increases persistence (Kuh et al., 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini). As previously noted, student affairs professionals who coordinate and advise co-curricular groups are not trained in how to serve and anticipate issues lower and working class students may have. As such, group members and advisors

may not be educated on how social class differences may alienate members. This research will hopefully contribute to student affairs professionals' understanding of these issues, and in turn assist in making college students' experiences positive and engaging ones, leading to enhanced persistence.

Since student affairs professionals are also typically unaware of social class variables like social capital and cultural capital, student affairs professionals may not consider how co-curricular experiences may enhance or reproduce social class standing (Vander Puten, 2001). Using a social class perspective allows student affairs professionals to understand how co-curricular experiences may enhance an individual's social and cultural capital, in turn enhancing economic capital and social class (Bourdieu, 1987). Since many students come to colleges and universities for that very reason, this is an important perspective to consider.

In Stuber's (2006) work on social class and the college experience, Greek organizations seemed to influence how students experienced class. More specifically, for students who were members of a Greek organization, the organization's members served as their reference group in most occasions. From a social class perspective, they defined themselves by comparing their lifestyle and consumption patterns against current members. No other student group was used as a comparison as often. Stuber, however, was not focused on the experiences of Greek letter organizations specifically, and recommended those groups be the focus of more social class based research. Women who participate in Greek letter organizations typically come from a higher SES background (Feldman & Newcomb, 1994). Douvan (1981) refers to Newcomb's (1962) research on sorority participation, suggesting that membership in a Greek organization helps to consolidate a young woman's identity as a member of a particular social class and continued socialization in the manners, forms, and

beliefs of that class. Feldman and Newcomb's summary of the research through the mid-1960s also demonstrated that women participating in Greek-letter organizations typically received a sense of security from participation and learned such skills as leadership and interpersonal communication. This phenomenon seems to hold today as Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) explain that fraternities and sororities usually attract students whose attitudes and values are significantly more conservative and traditional than those of their peers.

This study offers perspectives into the membership experiences of women in a Greek organization. Given the argument provided by Douvan, that students in this type of group are conservative, traditional, and consolidating, it is important to look at current organizations, and to understand the experiences of women who do and do not fit this stereotype, whether their experiences are positive or negative based on social class. Given Douvan's research was conducted nearly twenty years ago and that no similar research has been conducted since, we do not know if this finding is still accurate. The results from this study help student affairs practitioners better understand how Douvan's assertion, that sorority members are socially conservative, can be juxtaposed with ideas about social class, and how the experiences of individual members vary using this perspective. This research helps to better understand how the transmission of social and cultural capital occurs, if social class values consolidate group members, and if group members are marginalized due to social class issues.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between social class and the co-curricular experiences of female college students participating in a Greek-letter

organization at a large, urban, public university. The following research questions guide the study:

1. Do the experiences of women participating in self-perpetuating student organizations vary depending on their social class?
2. What does social class mean to the students? For example, are traditional markers of class such as high levels of family income, parental education, and appreciation for such aesthetic qualities as fine art and cuisine understood and valued by these women? Or are other indicators such as students' consumption patterns more meaningful?
3. Does this self-perpetuating student organization confer social and/or cultural capital to its members?
4. Does social class affect what they do and think about themselves and others?

Significance of Study

This study proposes to contribute to research and practice within the field of higher education and student affairs in four ways. First, this research aims to help practitioners and researchers better understand the nexus of social class and students' experiences during college. As previously explained, though sociologists have considered the influence of social class for some time, relatively few studies focus on social class (Vander Putten, 2001; Walpole, 1998). As Hooks (2000) reflects on her own college experiences as a poor, black student coming to college, she writes that college was the first time she was confronted with issues of class. She dealt with these experiences very much alone. In speaking with other

college graduates about this research, similar experiences are echoed. Understanding social class better and how it relates to students' experiences will help student affairs professionals better serve students from various backgrounds.

A second contribution of this research is to help researchers and practitioners better understand the impact of co-curricular involvement by examining the potential outcomes of student organization participation in terms of capital. While several scholars' research aims to guide practitioners' and researchers' work in this area (Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991; Tierney, 1992; Tinto, 1987), more can be done to better understand students' out-of-class involvement, especially using the lens of social class (Terenzini, et al., 2001; Tierney, 1992).

Third, many administrators and researchers within the field of higher education tend to know very little about students' co-curricular experiences (Kuh, et al., 1991). Specifically, we know very little about Greek organizations and the impact social class has on its members. This research cites seminal findings made by Douvan (1981) and Feldman and Newcomb (1964). While seminal, these studies are outdated, with the most recent being over twenty-years old. While more current studies have examined Greek life, none since Douvan's (1981) work tend to look at participants from a socio-economic aspect specifically. As institutions are considering social class as they admit and retain students, it is even more important to examine how and if student organizations are making any similar efforts.

A final contribution made by the study would relate to better understanding how students experience social class. The majority of college students are in a transitional period of their lives. As such, most traditional scales of social class do not cater to their situation (Wright, 2000). As Ortner (1998) writes, class is the last factor people consider when

discussing privilege and power. A greater understanding of how college students experience and construct social class would contribute to future research.

Study Overview and Organization of Proposal

Study participants will be recruited from a large, public university located in an urban area with an enrollment of over 20,000 students. Because the university is in an urban area and admission is not competitive the campus is likely to have substantial numbers of both upper and lower class students. For reasons explained in the following chapter, traditional-age college women participating in a Greek organization will be the focus of the study. The participants will be asked about their own social class standing and experiences within a Greek organization using a social class lens and a cross-sectional interviewing technique. By interviewing women who are first-year through senior-year students, the researcher hopes to learn about their experiences in the organization, paths to leadership positions, and persistence at the institution. This would be accomplished by taking a cross-section of students within each academic class.

In the next chapter, a detailed discussion is provided of social class including some additional definitional clarity. Then, an introduction to social class components including social class and social capital is explained. The relationship between higher education and social class based research is reviewed. Finally, a discussion of how social and cultural capital relate to co-curricular involvement is provided. The third chapter describes the methods to be used in this study while the fourth and fifth chapters focus on findings and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociological literature related to social stratification guides this study and is reviewed in this chapter. First to be reviewed are the concepts that undergird the meaning and structure of social class including social, cultural, and economic capital. Then, the methods of measuring and operationalizing social class are explained followed by a review of the research on higher education that uses a social class framework. This information includes techniques used to study the impact of social class and social capital within higher education literature, explaining that while some areas of higher education have received adequate examination from a social class perspective, very little research has been conducted on the college student experience related to social class and social capital. Finally, the key findings from studies related to social capital and student organization participation are summarized.

Social Class

Social class is difficult to define because it is both a construct projected by society and internalized by individuals (Bourdieu, 1987; Stewart & Ostrove, 1993; Vander Putten, 2001). Social theorists such as Marx and Engels (1848), and Weber (1909-1920) use the constructs of social class and social status as a way to better understand society and its power structure. Over the past twenty years, Bourdieu (1983, 1984, 1987), Coleman (1988), Wright (2000), and Lareau (2003) among others, have extended Marx and Weber's seminal research and theory.

A systematic examination of social class begins with Marx's landmark social class theories and research. Marx identified two fixed social classes within society: the proletariat, more commonly referred to as the working/lower class, and the bourgeoisie, more commonly

referred to as the upper-class (Marx & Engels, 1848). Marx believed individuals were either land and factory owners (the bourgeoisie) or land and factory workers (proletariat). Thus, social class was more economically determined through a person's connection to means of production. However, Marx's theory does not speak to the idea of status or social mobility, nor does it address the large middle-class structure that exists today in the United States. For example, lawyers and doctors are not necessarily the owners of production and would not be considered a part of the bourgeoisie according to Marx. At the same time, it would be inappropriate to consider professionals such as this working class or proletariat (Wright, 2000).

Wright, a current day Marxian theorist, expands upon Marx's original work. Based on two decades of empirical research, Wright (2000) produced a seminal book on social stratification in the United States, Sweden and Japan. In the spirit of Marxism, he used means of production along a twelve-point scale to identify individuals' social class. However, Wright explains that in some instances, his scale and the strict Marxist definitions of class are not accurate. One such instance relates to college students. Wright believes that direct class location including where an individual is in line with production and exploitation (a more Marxist definition) with mediating factors such as family ties, race, gender, networks of social relations, and membership in certain groups or communities are just as important in defining a person's social class. Therefore, in identifying a college student's social class, other factors besides their economic standing or relationship to production should be considered.

Weber (1909-1920) more thoroughly addressed the idea of a possible middle class and the idea of social mobility. Building upon Marx, Weber added that social class is not

fixed. Individuals may belong to a particular class but also have a specific social status. Weber explained that social class is not solely related to an individual's relationship to production. Instead, power can be derived from social and cultural sources, in addition to economic situations. Using Weber's definition, social classes are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas status groups are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods, represented by an individual's lifestyle. Weber argues that a focus on economics as the only source of power leads to an inaccurate view of societal stratification. Therefore, Weber argues that one must consider both an individual's class and status in order to identify the types of social and cultural resources to which one they would have access.

Building on to Weber's work, Bourdieu (1989) also addresses social mobility and reproduction, providing a definition of class that includes an individual's self-identification of class in addition to the aforementioned mediating factors of culture, social relations and gender, among others. Using Bourdieu's framework, social class becomes more complex. Bourdieu (1983) writes that particular forms of capital also influence the shape and social structures of class and different classes of people have different amounts of certain types of capital. Those with more quality and amounts of capital are considered to be of a higher class standing. This idea is comparable to Weber's concept of status, which is addressed further in the next section.

Marx, Weber, Wright, and Bourdieu provide compelling frameworks to examine social class and its manifestation in higher education organizations. Because Bourdieu offers a more refined approach to social class and due to the fact that Bourdieu's work is most often

used to address the role social class plays in education, a Bourdieuian framework informs this research.

Using a Bourdieuian framework, Lareau's (2003) more recent qualitative studies of social class's impact on K-12 education provides further insights into social class and forms of capital, and makes Bourdieu's framework more up-to-date and directly applicable to American culture. Conducted in France, most of Bourdieu's research and theories of social class are based on French culture and are approximately twenty years old. While Bourdieu's work is certainly seminal in terms of social class research, Lareau makes Bourdieu's framework of social class even more applicable to this research. As such, Lareau's definitions of social class and forms of capital contribute to this project.

Forms of Capital

Several forms of capital can be passed among individuals including economic, cultural, and social (Bourdieu, 1983). However, the most commonly emphasized types of capital related to education and particularly the topic of this study -- student co-curricular participation -- are social and cultural capital. For example, Lareau (2003) argues that a student's and/or parent's level of cultural capital may affect whether the student knows how to approach and communicate with a faculty member effectively. Another example provided by Kendall (2002) is that social capital through college alumni networks assists women in being inducted into the Greek organization of their choice. A more fulsome explanation of Bourdieu's work requires a more thorough understanding of economic, cultural, and social capital.

Economic capital refers to the property, capital, and financial wealth a family or individual possesses (Bourdieu, 1987). Examples would include the amount of land an individual owns, and/or the fiscal value of their stock shares and savings accounts. Other forms of capital, (e.g., cultural and social) can all be transformed into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1983). Typically, a person with more economic capital is considered to be a member of a higher class. Bourdieu's definitions of cultural and social capital are a bit more complex and layered in terms of their structure and transmission among individuals.

Cultural capital can take on three forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized (Bourdieu, 1983). *Embodied* cultural capital is the personal knowledge base and skill set, attitudes, and behaviors of the upper-class culture. Bourdieu explains that embodied cultural capital represents the dispositions of the mind and body commonly transmitted through the family structure. *Objectified* cultural capital refers to objects reflecting culture, such as paintings, books, or instruments. Possession of these material goods presupposes some level of cultural capital in order to appreciate them. *Institutionalized* cultural capital includes academic qualifications and credentials, certificates of cultural competence, framed diplomas, framed achievement awards, class rings, the use of titles and honorifics like Doctor, Professor, and Dean. These all require time and economic capital to accumulate (Barratt, 2005).

Bourdieu (1983) and Lareau (2003) explain unequal academic achievement among schoolchildren who have similar academic abilities. Bourdieu contends that students originating from different social classes possess an unequal distribution of cultural capital and attributes these students' varied academic performance to unequal distribution of cultural capital. While different forms of capital can be deliberately attained (e.g., some individuals

may move to a certain neighborhood or join a certain club to gain social capital) other forms of capital are obtained tacitly. For example, cultural capital is often passed from parents to children through everyday actions (Bourdieu, 1987; Lareau, 2003). According to Bourdieu, cultural capital can be acquired depending on the period, the society, and the social class and is not deliberate, occurring rather unconsciously. For example, an upper-class mother may pass along the skill of making small talk to her child inadvertently. The child simply picks up this type of capital by watching her mother.

Lamont and Lareau (1988) expand upon Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital by asserting that the value of capital depends heavily upon the setting or social context and that there is a difference between possessing capital and using that capital. Depending on the social class to which an individual belongs, one may be more aware of when and how to use cultural capital at appropriate times. For instance, horseplay and pranks were commonly displayed by working class students in MacLeod's (1995) qualitative study. Horseplay was a way working class children connected with adults in their neighborhood. They did not understand that this method of connecting was inappropriate for trying to establish rapport with a teacher.

Social capital is the "aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 248). Similarly, Portes (1998) defines social capital as the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures (Portes). In other words, it is the connections an individual has through membership in a group that provides opportunities and power to individuals. These groups provide members with collective resources, or capital. The amount of social

capital an individual possesses depends on the size of the network, the connections an individual can effectively mobilize and the volume of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital held by each person who is connected (Bourdieu).

Portes (1998) explains that social capital is a non-monetary source of power and influence in that social relationships allow individuals to claim access to resources possessed by their associates. Through social capital individuals may gain direct access to many other forms of capital such as economic capital, through investment tips, and cultural capital, through affiliation with individuals that confer valued credentials. Bourdieu (1983, 1987) argues that all of these forms of capital contribute to the social class to which an individual belongs.

Marsden (2004) and Portes (1998) write that *social networks* are forms of social capital. Social networks are used by individuals or groups to gain advantages in making use of resources and information as a form of social capital (Marsden). They do not form naturally but are instead formed through individual efforts (Portes). For networks and social capital to be useful in helping individual gain advantages, both must have closure and connectedness, otherwise known as enforceable trust (Coleman, 1988; Marsden; Portes).

An example of e*nforceable trust through the power of community* is that within a student organization Student A would help Student B, with trust that the favor will be returned in some way when appropriate. If the favor were not returned, Student B would run the chance of being ostracized from the group, while the actions of Student A for helping student B would yield approval from other members of the group. So the enforceable trust exists with both the donor of social capital and the recipient. And it can be passed to others (Portes, 1998).

Closure is the other condition that must be present to ensure the transmission of social capital (Coleman, 1988). Closure represents a sufficient number of ties between a certain number of individuals as a means to guarantee the observance of norms. For example, within a tightly knit group, Student A could not deny Student B a favor due to the number of ties each student has with other students in the group. Though Student B may not directly be able to ensure Student A follows through with the favor, others who have power over or influence on Student A who are also connected to Student B could do so.

Some argue that the ties must be strong and dense (Coleman, 1988); however, some argue that the ties not be as densely connected (MacLeod, 1995). If some groups are too interconnected, they may not have resources to help individuals succeed outside their group. For instance, in MacLeod's study of working class youth, the young men were very densely connected. They knew the people within their neighborhood since childhood. However, because they did not have social networks outside their neighborhood, their social capital did not propel them to succeed outside the neighborhood. All of these terms, *human capital, social class, social capital,* and *social networks* are forms of power possessed and employed by individuals at different times (Coleman).

Positive and Negative Forms of Social Capital

Drawing on the High School and Beyond database, Coleman (1988) posited three forms of social capital: obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms. *Obligations and expectations* can be owed to one another. In organizations where individuals are more self-sufficient and depend on each other less, there are fewer obligations toward the group. However, individuals in social structures with high obligations have more social

capital on which they can draw, such as owing someone a favor. Those with a lot of resources or power typically have more obligations they can call upon at any given time (Coleman). For example, in some organizations, the person with responsibilities for membership selection may obtain power through the favors they are owed after granting membership to individuals (Kendall, 2002). Coleman writes that within a particular organization there are those that are "in the Club" or not (p. 104). Kendall's work supports this idea as well. Therefore, participation in a particular organization does not necessarily entitle someone to the opportunity of obligations or other forms of social capital. The amount of obligations owed often depends upon an individual's status within the group.

Coleman's (1988) second form of social capital, an *information channel*, represents the potential for action that inheres in social relations. An example Coleman uses to describe information channels is a woman who may want to know a lot about fashion. She may not have the time to read all the pertinent magazines, but can ask friends with such knowledge in order to obtain the information. In this way, connections with friends serve as an information channel.

Norms and effective sanctions comprise Coleman's (1988) third form of social capital, which can be further divided into two categories: prescriptive and effective norms. *Prescriptive norms* are rigid and reinforced by internalization, social support, honor, status and other rewards. An example of this would be the idea that an individual within an organization should "forgo self-interest and act in the interests of the collectivity" (p.104). *Effective norms* relate directly to facilitating or constraining individual actions. The example Coleman provides is an organization that has strong effective norms about "having a good time" which would make it possible to ensure organization members behave "appropriately."

For example, if the norms of a group are to refrain from using alcohol, but an individual would prefer to drink, an effective norm would prevent the individual from doing so with the fear of being sanctioned. However, effective norms can also be limiting in that they reduce actions that are more innovative or could perhaps benefit the group. This effect is demonstrated in several ethnographic studies of working class youth. For example, in MacLeod's (1995) study, one particular group of young men was encouraged to socialize only with each other, missing learning and job opportunities that were afforded to young men outside the group.

In addition to Coleman's forms of social capital, Putnam offers "civicness" as another form of capital (Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2000). Putnam argues that communities with more social capital are more civically oriented. Putnam explains that communities with social capital are more likely to be involved in larger community-wide initiatives. While Putnam's unit of analysis is a large community such as a city, nation, or state, it is applicable to organizational analysis. The more invested and better integrated an individual is in an organization, the more likely she is to be positively involved. As such, Portes writes "involvement and participation in groups can have positive consequences for the individual and the community" (p. 2).

Social capital, however, can be negative, as previously explained by Coleman (1988). Portes (1998) writes that four forms of negative social capital exist: "exclusion of outsiders, excess claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward leveling norms" (p.15). *Excluding outsiders* is described by Kendall's (2002) ethnographic study of elite women's philanthropic organizations. Kendall studied organizations such as the Links and the Junior League. Kendall found that these organizations, in addition to women's

Greek letter organizations, are self-perpetuating. They attempt to exclude women who are not like current members of the group in terms of their family ties, class, race, appearance, personality, and/or economic standing.

Portes' second negative form of social capital, *excessive claims on group members*, can be demonstrated with the economic phenomenon "free-riding," as less diligent members force demands upon others. For instance, veteran members of a group often depend on newer members of a group to do more menial tasks (Kendall, 2002). More specifically, new members of a Greek organization are often asked to do things such as arranging recruitment activities, whereas the experienced members of the group typically delegate tasks and supervise recruitment activities.

Restriction on individual freedoms, or conformity, is the third form of negative social capital (Portes, 1998). Conformity also lends itself to less privacy and autonomy of individuals. For example, many student organization officers monitor members' social and personal behavior. In most any other context this would be considered an individual's private business and inappropriate.

The fourth form of negative social capital, *downward leveling norms*, perpetuates the social stratification or a set of values and attitudes that distinguish various groups apart from one another. This form of social capital is particularly applicable to groups that go against the mainstream. For instance, a network of students that does not support the academic mission of an institution reinforces the unimportance of academic performance to its members.

Functions of Social Capital

A review of the literature makes it possible to distinguish three functions of social capital. Coleman writes that these functions are: a source of social control, a source of benefits through extra-familiar networks, and a source of family support (Portes, 1998). The first two functions will be examined more closely as they are more directly tied to the purpose of this study. Putnam's (2000) nationally acclaimed mixed-method research on American communities expands upon the work of Coleman by contributing two additional functions of social capital: bonding and bridging. Putnam's work will be described after Coleman's explanations of social capital functions are provided.

The way in which social capital is a form of social control was previously addressed in this literature review through Coleman's description of norms and effective sanctions. As well, social capital serves as a source of benefits through extra-familiar networks (Portes, 1998). This function of social capital acts as a particularly useful resource by, for example, serving as informal employment referral systems, something of keen interest to recent college graduates. Conversely, extra-familiar networks could affect the job search process through limited information. Coleman (1988) explains that the working or lower class networks have small or non-existent sources of information about employment. In this case the network is very feeble and provides a disservice for its members.

Two other functions of social capital exist: bonding and bridging (Putnam, 2000). *Bridging social capital* serves to include individuals, while bonding social capital serves to exclude people. An example of an organization that mainly provides bridging social capital would be a mentoring program or a student activist group. An example of an organization that provides bonding social capital would include a fraternal organization. Putnam draws on

the work of economic sociologists to argue that bonding social capital is not as valuable as bridging social capital. *Bonding social capital* allows an individual to maintain their present status, whereas bridging social capital allows an individual to get ahead. In metaphorical terms, bonding social capital functions like super glue while bridging social capital functions as a lubricant which eases connections among various groups of people.

Though there are three different functions, one commonality among all the functions is that capital serves as a source of power. French and Raven (1959) define power as the ability to influence other people, often as a means to get things done or to accomplish goals. Similar to the five functions of social capital, there are five forms of power: legitimate, reward, coercive, referent, and expert. It is easy to connect the functions of capital to forms of power. Kendall (2002) connected the two constructs through her study of social organizations. For instance, someone with knowledge on fundraising has expert power, while someone who oversees discipline within a group has coercive power.

Measurement of Social Class

In reviewing the literature on the topic, there is no one standard measure used to identify individuals' social class (Barratt, 2005; Bourdieu, 1987; Lareau, 2003; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Stuber, 2006). This is in part because it is nearly impossible to accurately estimate an individual's social class as it is a combination of many variables ranging from education, occupation, and income to finer and less commonly used variables such as an individual's class identification, personal tastes, beliefs and values (Bourdieu, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1989; Sennett & Cobb, 1993; Weber, 1909-1920; Wright, 2000).

Others such as Jackman (1979), Ortner (1998), Ostrove and Long (2007), Langhout et al. (2007) and Stuber (2006) posit that in order to properly ascertain an individual's social class, both objective and subjective measures must be used. Subjective measurements include asking the individual to which class s/he belongs, whereas objective measures such as income and education are more tangible. Such indicators of social class are supported by Bourdieu's definition of social class in that a person's *habitus*, or internal feelings and dispositions, which would be subjective in nature, define their class standing similar to that of social, economic, and cultural capital.

Social researchers often use race, ethnicity, and/or gender as a means to infer individuals' social class (Ortner, 1998). Some go so far to say that race, gender, and class cannot be studied separately (Ortner). However, a counterargument is that in order to understand and get at the core of class, gender and race should not be considered simultaneously (Lareau, 2003; Ortner). For example, Ortner's qualitative study examines how social class relates to ethnicity, more specifically being Jewish. While Ortner writes that class is the only identity term Americans use around an economic axis, race and ethnicity differences emerge from a shared identity and externally projected personality. In her model, Ortner did not pull the constructs apart. However, she explains that one can construct a model in which class exists apart from race and ethnicity, in which race and ethnicity provide better or worse skills for success in the social class "game" (p. 9). For the purposes of this study, class will be considered separately from gender and race as a means to drill down to its core essence. Walpole (1998) took a similar approach in her qualitative work with college women, interviewing mostly white, traditionally-aged college women.

Describing Class

Ortner (1998) provides examples of how gender and race affect a person's conceptualizations of class. For instance, when asking her study participants to describe working class individuals, respondents often described men. She found that 'working class' is more of a masculine term. Additionally, in separating the terms *working class* from *lower class*, she found that society tends to use the phrase 'working class' to describe white blue-collar workers and 'lower class' to describe black blue-collar workers.

Another topic tackled by Ortner (1998) and Jackman (1979) are the words used to self-identify with a class, such as *working class*, *upper class*, and other categorical phrases. When asked what class individuals belong to, not one participant in Ortner's study indicated confusion and all easily placed themselves into a group. Ortner explains that the vast majority of Americans think of themselves as middle class. Of all the social class categories, 'middle class' is the most slippery. It is often used as a modest self-label for the upper-middle class, or as a elevating self-label for the lower-middle class; 'working class' is used much more sparingly. Most often individuals who fall into this category dislike the phrase, feeling it is associated with being lower class. So Ortner uses the term 'lower-middle class' for working class individuals. For this study, I will use the terms lower-middle class and upper-middle class to identify the participants, similar to the categorical modeling used by Ortner and Stuber (2006).

Jackman's (1979) seminal work on measuring social class is based on a national database of 1,914 cases at the University of Michigan. When asking individuals to rank six items that determine a person's class, *beliefs and feelings* were ranked very important by

40% of participants. *Style of life* was next, (38.6%), closely followed by *occupation* at 37%. The findings of the study demonstrated that cultural and expressive factors weigh at least as heavily as objective factors in defining social class. The way Americans associate occupation with classes suggests that they are more sensitive to SES hierarchies based upon occupational prestige, education, skill, income, job authority, and task discretion than the actual blue/white collar dichotomy (Jackman). Most respondents did not consider middle class associated with blue collar work, even if it was skilled. Jackman and Jackman (1973) found that capital ownership does not have a relationship to individual's social class identification. According to Jackman and Jackman, being able to name high-status friends and neighbors was positively related to one's subjective social class.

Models

Often, a categorical model of social class is used by placing people in groups such as working/lower class, middle class, and upper class instead of being placed on a gradated scale (Lareau, 2003; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Stuber, 2006). This same type of model is commonly used in the landmark works of Lareau (P. Walters, personal communication, March 2007). Social class is also a construct of which most individuals intuitively have a general sense (Warren, 2007), and so such fine gradations are not particularly necessary or even possible (Wright, 2000).

Several quantitative scales exist to measure social status. Social status is often used as a proxy for social class (Barratt, 2006; Hollingshead, 1975). One identifier that most scales include in identifying social class is occupation (Hollingshead, 1975; Jackman, 1979; Jackman & Jackman, 1973; Lareau, 2003). Occupation is used as a proxy for income earned.

Occupation is also used as a proxy for an individual's power and prestige (Hollingshead, 1975; Marx & Engels, 1848). For instance, a person who owns a company or is a professional in a field typically has a higher income and access to social and cultural capital compared to someone who is a laborer (Bourdieu, 1987). Education is often used as a measurement of social class. With more education, it is assumed that individuals who possess different levels of education have different tastes and tend to exhibit different behavior and consumption patterns (Hollingshead).

Hollingshead's Index has been used for decades as an empirical tool to identify social status across academic fields (Barratt, 2006; Hollingshead, 1975; Ostrove, 2003; Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Stewart & Ostrove, 1993). Hollingshead devised his scale after two years of qualitative study on the social structure of a community in the northeastern United States. Hollingshead's Index uses four factors of estimate an individual's social class: marital status of the head of the household, which accounts for the possibility of two incomes and two educated household members, gender, type of occupation, and level of education.

The occupation measures are based on a nine-step scale. Whenever possible, the scale was tied to the occupational titles used by the US Census in 1970. Occupation scores are based on nine categories and assigned a score of one through nine. The nine categories, beginning with the lowest scoring category are as follows: (a) menial service workers and unemployed - score of one (b) unskilled workers (c) semi-skilled labor, (d) skilled laborers (e) clerical and sales workers (f) semi-professionals or technical workers, (g) administrative personnel or small business owner, (h) administrators, minor professional or manager of medium businesses, (i) major professional or executive - score of nine (Barratt, 2006;

Hollingshead, 1975; Ostrove 2007). The educational factor is scored on a seven-point scale with the assumption that individuals who possess different levels of education often have different tastes and behavior patterns. The seven categories used to divide formal education are listed below starting with the lowest scoring category: (a) less than seventh grade – score of one, (b) completing junior high school, (c) partial high school, (d) high school graduate, (e) partial college, (f) college graduate, and (g) graduate/professional degree – score of seven. Hollingshead posits that occupation should be weighted more heavily than education. Occupation is what individuals are more commonly known by in society and rewarded for economically (Hollingshead). Occupation also results in economic capital while education does not necessarily have the same direct relation. So Hollingshead weighs occupation by five and education by three. The gender scale accounts for male and female and the marital status is differentiated by spouses living together and if one or both are employed. If both parents are employed, the total score for occupation and education is summed and divided by two.

An example of the Hollingshead Index follows:

Student A's two parents are married. The father is a manager of a supermarket. He completed high school and one year of technical college. Student A's mother is not employed. She holds a bachelor's degree. Using the Hollingshead Index, the father's occupation receives a score of six, the mother's occupation is not factored in since she does not work. The father's education receives a score of five, the mother receives a score of six. Their scores are averaged, resulting in an education score of 5.5. The factors are weighted – the occupation score by five and the education score by three as such: Occupation Factor: 6 x 5 =

30; Education Factor: 5.5 x 3 = 16.5; Total Score: 46.5. Student A's background would be considered upper-middle class.

Social status computed scores range from a low of eight to a high of 66. Hollingshead groups data as such: upper-class (55-66); upper-middle class (40-54); middle class (30-39); working or lower-middle class (20-29); lower-class (8-19). Barratt (2006) groups the data as such: upper-class (51.5-66); upper-middle class (37-51.4); middle class (22.5-37); working and lower class (8-22.5). Barratt allows more room in all categories, by combining the lower and working class categories into one. He does not explain why this is done in this way.

Hollingshead (1975) acknowledged that education and occupation do not stabilize until later adulthood, the late twenties or early thirties. Therefore, a revised instrument may be needed to capture the social class of college students. Additionally, the occupational index is tied to 1970s census data, as some of the occupations that exist today did not exist in 1970. Barratt (2006) added to Hollingshead's scale, updating the occupational listing. The social class categories used in this research were based on an updated version of Hollingshead's occupational and educational categorizations (Barratt; Hollingshead). In addition, students' subjective status identifications were considered for this report. The objective measurements, education and occupation, were crosschecked with information provided in student information sheets. The information sheets asked questions about parental income, financial resources for education, work patterns, and consumption and lifestyle questions similar to those used by in Ostrove and Long's recent publication on social class (2007). This information was checked against US Census data. By looking at students' ZIP codes, US Census data provides income level by ZIP code. So the income reported by the women was compared to the income by ZIP code.

Higher Educational and Social Class

To understand the importance of social class in higher education, as previously explained, several researchers have used social class and SES as a variable to better understand participation in higher education. Specifically, students from lower social class backgrounds are less likely to get support or assistance in college preparation from home (Ting, 1998). In addition, they have lower graduation rates (Gladieux & Swail, 1998); work more hours and are less likely to participate in co-curricular experiences (Walpole, 2003). They attend less selective institutions (Hossler & Bean, 1990), and also have a harder time adjusting to college life (Feldman & Newcomb, 1994). Academic preparation, high aspirations, and familial support are easier to come by if a family is from a higher socioeconomic status (Kuh et al., 2006).

Psychologists and sociologists have studied college students to better understand the effects of social class. Ostrove published and co-authored several studies on the psychological impact of social class on female college students (Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Ostrove & Long, 2001; Stewart & Ostrove, 1993). Ostrove and Cole posit that "despite the fact that education is intended to be the great equalizer, more often it serves to reproduce class…sites of education, therefore are a rich laboratory in which to study the experience of class" (p.678).

In another study, Ostrove and Long (2001) examined college women's social class identity and the extent to which they felt class influenced their college experience psychologically. They found seniors more likely to articulate a difference in their experiences when compared with first- and second-year students. Students from lower and middle-class backgrounds articulated considerably less access to various resources.

Sociologists DiMaggio and Mohr (1985), Kendall (2002), and Caiazza and Putnam (2002) found that social status may be more important to women than men. Kendall reported that men often hold more economic and political power than their female counterparts. Women hope to achieve some source or power and capital through involvement in organizations in which they compete with other women instead of men; they obtain social power as a result. Among other variables, women define themselves in the context of human relationships. A woman's place and sense of self are determined by the networks of relationships on which she relies (Gilligan, 1993). Historical accounts and qualitative research demonstrate the importance of peer relationships to women (Solomon, 1985). Therefore, it is possible that social and cultural capital are more important to women than men in terms of interpersonal relationships and status within groups outside of work. This is another reason why the study of the effects of social class on women is important.

Social Capital, Participation in College and Student Organizations

Success and retention at college is linked to a person's social and academic integration, a process that is partially predicted by their background and prior experiences (Tierney, 1992; Tinto, 1987). According to Feldman and Newcomb (1994), students from a lower-class background have a harder time adjusting to college both academically and socially. As Weidman (1987) writes, socialization is dependent upon students being able to accept and act under a set of norms adopted by a group or institution. Students from working or lower class backgrounds often struggle making friends and practicing traditional social graces, and show more signs of stress since the norms and behaviors at campus may be quite different than at home and since their anticipatory socialization may be quite different when

compared to upper or middle-class peers. Eventually, these feelings can lead them to withdraw from their environment and be less likely to demonstrate these behaviors and feelings, perhaps due to the nature of the students who select and attend these institutions initially (Feldman & Newcomb). Little work has been done to see if student participation in social organizations mediates any of these feelings or students' behaviors and experiences using a social class perspective (Walpole, 1998). Additionally, none of the previously reviewed research including that of Walpole and Ostrove (2003) took place outside of selective institutions.

According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), "the long-term impact of college manifests itself in two ways: college attendance/degree attainment...and socioeconomic positioning" (p. 582). Individuals experience this impact through interests, experiences and opportunities made more likely by being a college graduate – the lifestyles students adopt. Further, interpersonal involvement impacts students' aspirations, values, and a number of psychosocial characteristics.

Greek Organization.

Modest evidence suggests that Greek affiliation may inhibit growth in moral reasoning, increasing the likelihood of both academic dishonesty and binge drinking during college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, the effect of Greek affiliation on binge drinking during college does not extend beyond the post-college years for either men or women. Also, modest evidence supports the contention that fraternity or sorority membership can promote one's career. "Greek affiliation during college has a positive impact on the development of career-related skills" (Pascarella & Terenzini, p. 617). Sororities have positive but small effects on members' interpersonal skills, community orientation, and

commitment to civic engagement. Membership has no appreciable impact on peer independence or locus of attribution for academic success, and it remains unclear whether the apparent negative influence of membership on social and political liberalism is real or a reflection of the dispositions students bring to college. Sorority and fraternities have a negative influence on members' racial-ethnic attitudes and openness to diverse ideas and people (Pascarella & Terenzini).

Viewing student organizations through a social class perspective, connections between social class and student organization participation can easily be made. Bourdieu (1983) posits that it is highly unlikely that individuals with drastically different types of capital will come into contact socially. In order to maintain certain levels of capital within specific groups, individual members should have a say as to whether others can join their network or group, similar to the idea of bonding capital as described by Putnam (2000). While neither Bourdieu nor Putnam studied college student organizations specifically, the practices of Greek-letter organization recruitment as well as other organizations using a self-perpetuating selection process resemble this idea.

The Recruitment Process.

The membership recruitment process of Greek-letter organizations, among other social organizations, perpetuates the organization's social class standing (Kendall, 2002). Given that this research is geared toward better understanding the college experience, sorority recruitment will be used as an example. The sorority recruitment process varies in length and timing. At some institutions, recruitment occurs in the fall, often before classes begin in August. At others, recruitment takes place at the beginning of the spring semester. Official recruitment periods can last from roughly a few days to one week. During the first

day or two of the sorority recruitment process, women attend a series of timed social exchanges with members of various sorority chapters, otherwise known as parties. The potential members attend parties at most of the sorority chapters during the first days of recruitment. During these parties, social exchanges consist of small talk between a potential new member and current member(s), perhaps a small scale community service project, or a skit conducted by current sorority members about that particular sorority and why one would want to join.

After the parties, members of the organization discuss each woman who attends the parties and score them using a scale determined by the chapter. The scale uses qualities of importance as determined by current members of the chapter in addition to any institution specific guidelines. A list of women who are seen as a good "fit" is then generated and matched with the potential new member's list of chapters she prefers to visit again. This process continues for a few days. Each night the list of women the chapters invite back becomes more selective as does the list potential new members create. After each night of recruitment, chapters often track their "return rates" for potential new members. For example, if all potential new members indicate they want to visit a particular chapter the next day, that chapter's return rate would be 100%.

From the potential new member's perspective, the recruitment process is a bit different for a woman who is already connected to a particular chapter through her family or family friends. Special consideration is made for women whose mothers, sisters, grandmothers or other close relatives were members of a particular sorority. These women are considered legacies. Additionally, alumnae of each chapter can complete a Rushee Information Form (RIF) as a means to formally recommend a potential new member to the

group. This serves as a recommendation form of sorts. Most often, only past members of the organization can complete these forms (Kendall, 2002).

Once recruitment week is over, the chapters generate a final list of potential new members while the potential new members rank the chapters in the order they would like to join. The groups are matched and then "bid day" occurs. *Bid day* is a time when the potential new members find out what chapter they will join and vice versa. Then, the pledging period begins. During this time, new members learn about the chapter's history, get to know chapter members, and participate in most chapter events. The pledge period can last several weeks or an entire semester depending on the group. Once that period is over, the potential new member or "pledge" participates in a ceremony and is deemed a new member of the organization.

There are several reasons why women join these organizations, ranging from wanting to make friends to following in a parent's footsteps, among others. Sociologists such as Kendall (2002) identified types of capital or power a person possesses from membership as a reason for joining such groups. Applying French and Raven's typologies of social power to women's participation in Junior League, Kendall found female members of these groups acquired and maintained power, particularly referent power, through membership. For instance, women who participated in the group were more likely to be invited to other community groups, enroll their children in "more desirable" schools, and connect with other prominent women in the community who could provide them with various forms of social capital. While providing insight into self-perpetuating women's philanthropic organizations, Kendall's work does not examine these ideas within formal student organizations.

Sifting and Sorting.

Do elite organizations exist on a college campus and serve the specific purpose of maintaining social stratification and providing social capital to their members? Kendall (2002) thinks so. Portes (1998) and Coleman (1988) would also support the idea that organizations are intentionally formed and maintained in order to provide power and social capital to their members. Portes and Putnam (2000) add that organizations provide social capital to their members through "investment strategies." Portes draws from Bourdieu to explain benefits such as social capital from membership as the basis of solidarity which makes such organizations possible.

Kendall (2002) describes what it is like to be an outsider to organizations. As a participant/observer, Kendall mainly studied the Texas Junior League, a large group of wealthy women who participate in this social organization with a service focus. Even though she was an active participant, she contends she was an outsider to these organizations. She proposes that if women do not come from the right families with financial resources or community connections, they are typically left "out of the loop." Women who are not part of this inner circle are sometimes marginalized by being asked to do menial tasks or jump through hoops to prove themselves. Her work also included a very brief study of sorority life. She indicated that she saw the same patterns emerging there.

Ryan and Sackrey (1984) posit that faculty members from working or lower-middle class backgrounds feel as though they cannot be themselves and fit in with their academic peers. Other dissertations have examined this phenomenon from a student perspective (Walpole, 1998). Walpole studied women who attended a prestigious private liberal arts school in the northeast. She examined if the students felt a part of the college culture and how

they accessed social and cultural capital. However, authors suggest that more research should be done to better understand students' experiences in student organizations from a social class perspective (Walpole; Wimberly, 2000), especially that of students in Greek organizations (Stuber, 2006).

Drawing on Sennett and Cobb's (1972) studies of the working class, Vander Putten (2001) found many students from lower or working-class backgrounds must deal with "status incongruity" and a feeling of marginalization (p.16). This occurs as students join organizations whose primary membership is dissimilar to their family demographics. The students experience dissonance between their position and their previous experience and do not feel strongly connected to either. This happens especially when lower-income students enter into environments with middle to high-income students as the majority. The interaction of groups on a college campus or within a single organization causes confusion for students as to their aspirations and thoughts about college education (Vander Putten). The extent of this dissonance enters into their relationship with their family, friends, and other agents of both groups.

Following the recommendations made by Walpole (1998) and Stuber (2006), my research examined social class within the setting of a student organization at a public university. In this study, I explored students' experiences using a social class perspective at a university less prestigious relative to the settings of earlier studies, thus filling a gap in the literature. Most studies involving college students have not focused on formal co-curricular experiences using a social class lens, which is further explored with this research. The present study examined whether college student organizations provide social capital to their members and if so, what types. Another goal was to understand if these experiences varied

based on a particular student's social class. Finally, I examined this phenomenon qualitatively, providing data about students' experiences and feelings.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

A paradigm is a "basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 105). Because the experiences and impact of social class are lived, they are best captured through qualitative research (Carspecken, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Patton, 2002). Qualitative research is "multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter" (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 2). Given that little is understood about students' co-curricular experiences, particularly from a social class perspective, there are a number of approaches that could be used for this research (Cresswell, 2003). I chose to study students in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of the experiences of students and the meanings those students attach to their experiences.

The research was an applied, orientational qualitative inquiry using a case study approach. It was applied in that it focused on better understanding the societal problem of social class reproduction (Patton, 2002). It is orientational, in that the inquiry began with the theoretical perspective of critical theory because I share a concern for social inequalities (e.g. advantages due to social class) and direct my work to positive social change (Carspecken, 1996). The literature guiding the research explores social institutions that privilege some individuals over others (Lemert, 2004).

Research Design

A case study approach was used as the study is an intensive description and analysis of a contemporary phenomenon within a bounded group, focused more on understanding instead of confirmation (Merriam, 1998). The data for this study came primarily from individual interviews with 15 different women participating in a Greek-letter organization.

Interviews were semi-structured during the first round (Walpole, 1998). Interviews were also conducted with Greek community stakeholders such as the institutional and local chapter advisors, and three members of Panhellenic Council. I also asked the participants to participate in journaling about their daily interactions using a social class perspective. More detail about this aspect of the study is provided later.

Participants were compensated for their participation. Since this is a study about social class and not taking financial resources for granted, students were compensated as they completed various portions of the study at a rate of roughly ten-dollars per hour. More specifically, after finishing the information sheet and first interview, students received twenty-dollars. After completing the journal activity and second interview students received ten-dollars for the interview and ten-dollars for the journaling, totaling forty-dollars for complete participation.

Selecting a Study Site

A large, urban, public institution was the study site because much of the research on students' social class experiences has been conducted at selective private institutions (Langhout, et al., 2007; Ostrove, 2003; Walpole, 1998). Students from various social backgrounds are more likely to enroll in a public, urban institution, offering a diverse group of students from which to sample. This institution's enrollment is just over 21,000 students, 17,000 of which are from in-state. The total number of undergraduates is approximately 15,000 with 80% of the students self-identifying as White and 20% of undergraduate living on campus, making it a commuter campus. The average undergraduate student ACT score is 24.3. The cost of attendance for one year is just over $13,000.00 with the average award of

need-based scholarships or grants being $7,000 and the average need based loan amount being just under $3000.00. Just over half of the undergraduate students receive some form of need based grants, scholarships, and/or loans.

One of the Panhellenic chapters was invited to participate in the study through an invitation extended to the President and advisor. One chapter was selected in order to make the observations manageable. All but two of the women studied lived with other sorority members because the organizational experience would be more concentrated; Douvan (1981) posits that proximity, as experienced by students who live together, emerges as a major force in determining friendships. Newcomb (1962) suggests peer groups are more likely to be found wherever local arrangements, such as dining or studying, result in very frequent associations among a given group. Physical proximity, or propinquity, influences the behavior of student through interactions with peers. Participants did not necessarily live in the sorority house, but lived with other sorority members of the same chapter either in their residence hall, house, or apartment.

I studied the chapter of which I was once a participant. Case study analysis requires a high level of intuition and sensitivity (Merriam, 1998). Being a member of the organization myself, I served as the ultimate insider with perspective into chapter traditions, rituals, and institutional culture. My membership also resulted in a higher level of trustworthiness and rapport between myself and the participants, something that is critical to social class research (Stuber, 2006).

Sample Selection

Purposeful sampling techniques were used since I wanted to understand and gain insight and selected a sample from which I think I could glean the most information (Merriam, 1998). I utilized a maximum variation technique in order to sample young women who fall within varying ranges of social classes as it is widely accepted that varying degrees of a phenomenon provide the most insight (Merriam). More about participant selection is provided later in this chapter.

Greek organizations were studied for several reasons. One reason is simply because they are a long-standing co-curricular aspect of a college student's experiences (Rudolph, 1990). Another reason is supported by Stuber's (2006) work on college students' experiences of class. She writes that for her subjects, Greek involvement encapsulated the identity and involvement of many students, such that it may serve as an especially important site for learning about social class. In other words, it served as a reference group for the students in some aspects (Weidman, 1989). Given Greek students were not the focus of Stuber's study, this research hoped to pick up where she left off. Greek organizations served as a focal point due to the fact that they have many qualities of a social network which would lend itself to better understanding the roles of social and cultural capital within the organization (Marsden, 2004). In reading Bourdieu's (1987) work, I automatically made connections between how Greek organizations and the communities he studied applied similar techniques in order to reproduce social class structure, such as self-perpetuating membership selection processes. Another reason Greek organizations were studied is due to the stereotypical nature of the group. As previously relayed, past research describes Greek students as being very similar and interested in membership due to social class reproduction (Douvan, 1981; Kendall, 2002;

Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Through relaying members' stories, this stereotype will be examined.

Findings from a previous study explained that older students better articulate the impact of class on their college experiences when compared with younger students. More specifically, senior students felt as though their social class influenced their experience whereas first-year students did not indicate any influence (Ostrove & Long, 2001). The researchers did not explain why they think this is. Perhaps it is that senior students have had more experiences while at college or it could be that senior students could be more reflective given their maturity and experiences. Stuber's (2006) work on social class and college students was based on sophomore participants. Stuber found that sophomores were able to discuss class issues. For this study a cross-section of first-years, sophomores, juniors, and seniors were selected. First-year students were used because college is sometimes the first encounter young adults have with individuals from different social classes (Langhout, et al., 2007; Vander Putten, 2001). Capturing these initial reactions will inform the research and capture the insights of students who may likely leave the organization due to differences.

A final variable that was considered was similarities among women such as race and academic preparedness. Walpole (1998) tried to select participants for her college student study with similar SAT/ACT scores. Selecting participants with equal academic ability hopefully standardized any academic transition issues students were having, which would confound their experiences on campus. Walpole also tried to select only white women, as the argument is made that race often confounds social class, making the two difficult to separate (Ortner, 1998; Walpole, 1998). Additionally, some researchers posit that it would be difficult

as a white researcher to accurately understand the experiences of someone outside my race (Lareau, 2003).

Study Information Sheet

Participants were selected through the use of a personal student information sheet (Appendix A), similar to the ones used in other social class research (Stuber, 2006). They were administered to students as they indicated interest in participating in the study. The study information sheet was used to ascertain a woman's social class. The study information sheet asked potential participants questions regarding basic demographics: that of age, name, race, and a self-identifying social class category. On this form, participants were asked whether I may contact them via Facebook (a Web-based community in which many college students and alumni participate), in addition to their E-mail address and whether I may contact them via E-mail. Other personal information such as ACT/SAT scores and home address were requested. The home address allowed me to learn a bit about the background of the student. By using ZIP codes, the researcher found out about the area income levels through US Census data.

I had hoped that four students from each academic class would be invited to participate, all with varying social class backgrounds. The four participants from each class were intended to represent different social classes from the first-year class through senior students. However, when the information sheets were returned, it became apparent that there were no middle or lower-middle class students in the junior class. In the instance when four students were not available from each class, I attempted to select additional participants from other academic classes who would represent that social class. After discussion with a peer

debriefer, I selected two additional first-year students to participate who were from lower social class echelons. One student participated, while the other did not due to work obligations.

Parental demographic information was collected because most-if not all-of the students were dependent upon their parents financially through college. In an informal poll of 22 undergraduate students who were enrolled in a class I taught on social class, I asked them to indicate if they associate with the same social class as their parents. All but one student said yes. The one that disagreed did so simply because s/he felt as though they had not earned the money that would place them in that class, and therefore s/he felt they were not entitled to the same social class categorization. Parental information included income, occupation, and level of education for both the mother and father or legal guardian.

Participants were grouped using Hollingshead's Index. Once students were assigned a score, students' subjective social class was taken into account as was economic information based from their hometown zip code, parents' income information, and information provided during the first interview related to opportunities of gaining cultural and social capital like trips abroad and groups students participated in prior to coming to college. Given the small number of participants in this study a categorical model of social class made the data more manageable (Lareau, 2003; Stuber, 2006).

The social class categories were determined using a similar approach to that of Ostrove and Long (2007), pulling from Hollingshead's (1975) original work with updates from Barratt's (2006) model and techniques used by Stuber (2006) and Lareau (2003). As explained earlier, the nine occupational categories that the students' parents fell into were assigned a score using Hollingshead's Index and then summed and divided by two if both

parents were employed. The educational category was scored on the seven point scale used by Hollingshead and averaged if both parents occupied the home. Hollingshead posits that occupation should be weighted more heavily than education as explained in Chapter 2. That is, occupation results in economic capital while education does not necessarily have the same direct relation. So Hollingshead and Barratt (2006) weigh occupation by five and education by three. While Ostrove did not specifically mention this exact process, her work was based on the same scale. The median income was also taken into account in addition to the median income of the participants' surrounding community using 1990 US Census data. See Appendix B for a listing of all the 15 participants' Hollingshead Index results, family's self-reported baseline salary and census data. I also compared the Hollingshead results with those of Barrat's (2006) Index in order to allow for some other comparison of social class rating.

Interviews

The next step included a series of in-depth interviews with the 15 selected women (Stuber, 2006; Walpole, 1998). Fourteen of the women were selected due to their academic class and social class standing the 15th participant was the Chapter President. An interview protocol is included in Appendix C. Two one-to-two hour interviews were conducted. The questions for the first interview were open ended and pre-determined. In the first interview I tried to better understand the institutional context, the organizational context, and get to know the subject more intimately, capturing a more accurate picture of the participants' social class. The interview also uncovered how social, economic, and cultural capital presented itself within the organization and the experiences of students from a social class perspective. A second interview allowed me to ask follow-up questions.

Interviews were also conducted with the advisor of the organization at the institutional level, who was a former member of the organization, with three Panhellenic Council Members, and with the university student affairs staff member who supervises the group. Panhellenic Council is the governing body, much like a student government system, that regulates Greek activities such as social events and formal recruitment. Panhellenic Council is made up of one to two representatives of each sorority on campus. Panhellenic Council also has a governing structure with a president, vice presidents, secretary, and treasurer. A tentative interview protocol for the advisors is included in Appendix D. The protocol for the Panhellenic members is included in Appendix E. The protocol for the chapter President's interview is in Appendix F. The data from the advisor and Panhellenic members' interviews was mainly used to triangulate the data from the Rho Beta member interviews.

Observations

Another form of data collection was observations. Once the study information sheet and first round of interviews were complete, I observed some of the organization's and the participants' activities (Walpole, 1998). Specifically, I attended one one-hour executive officer meeting. The executive officers typically consist of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and recruitment chair, among other officers. Typically, chapter officers meet weekly for an hour or two to discuss chapter business and the upcoming meeting. I attended two two-hour chapter meetings. Chapter meetings typically occur once a week. Some of the chapter meetings include secret ceremonious activities I observed but did not include in my observation notes (Appendix G).

Journal Activity

While it would be ideal to observe day-to-day interactions, doing so would be nearly impossible and intrude too much in the participants' lives (V. Torres, personal communication, November 7, 2007). As an alternative to shadowing chapter members students journaled about their social interactions and personal routine. The journaling activity included students selecting two days to journal their day-to-day activities and reflections of their activities using a social class perspective. The journaling grid is provided in Appendix H.

Students were twice asked to plot their daily routine, focusing on interactions with others. Some used a grid, which I emailed to them, to provide some structure to the activity. Other participants just jotted notes via email. I asked the participants to select two days at random to journal about their experiences. The two days must have occurred in between the two interviews and at least one of the days must have occurred during the week. Once they completed the entries, they sent their journals back via email or I collected them at the second interview.

Diaries and journaling activities have long been used as a method for gaining an understanding of respondents' experiences in their natural environment (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003). However, the journal activities proved to be rather fruitless. It appeared the women did not journal throughout their day, but selected an hour or two within their days to journal about in detail. These journals yielded very little detail or useable data. So they were not utilized.

To compensate for the lack of information retrieved from the journals, I reviewed hand-made documents like scrap books and attended additional chapter functions. Through

scrapbook pictures, pictures that were deliberately chosen to be displayed in books in the home, the photos served to triangulate observations I made through interviews and attending chapter events. For instance, the emphasis women placed on appearance was evident with pictures of the women at formal events, during recruitments, and socials highlighted in the books. Pictures of the women at campus events also underscored the theme of campus involvement as detailed through the interviews. There were several photos of the women at intramural events, participating in the Greek sing, and fraternity skit nights. Attending other events like the Greek sing also supported the theme developed through interviews that the Rho Beta women were very competitive and prized being involved in campus. The women placed at the competition and were recognized at the end of the competition by receiving several campus awards for involvement.

Document Analysis

Before interviews begin, a document analysis was also conducted. Greek life offices often publish recruitment materials, calendars, and each Greek-letter organization often publish newsletters and calendars, which would provide insight into the role of social class and the organization. The University's Greek life Web site was reviewed, as was the local and national chapter Web site, and the institution's recruitment handbook. As I was conducting interviews, I would tour the chapter house since most of the interviews occurred there. In touring the house, I reviewed two hand-made chapter scrap books that spanned two years, reviewed artwork and pictures in the home, and reviewed the chapter's display case in the Student Activities Center. By reviewing records, conducting interviews, and in completing observations, data was triangulated (Patton, 2002).

Data Analysis

The scales of occupation, salary, and income were scored against Hollingshead's Index of Social Status scales and participants' own social class self-identification (Hollingshead, 1975). A similar approach was taken in Ostrove and Long's (2007) recent work on class identification of college students. Barrat (2006) also used a variation of the Hollingshead scale to measure students' social class. While I have been unable to find validity studies on Hollingshead's Index, its popularity as a way of measuring social class has been offered in various publications over the past 50 years, and much of the recent research supports for its use.

After the first round of interviews and document analysis, the data was coded using both inductive and deductive methods. *Inductive* means that codes emerge from interviews, allowing the researcher to account for the subject's own words. *Deductive* methods were also used, in that some codes are predetermined, such as why the students participate in Greek life, feelings of marginalization or empowerment, and the social or cultural capital transmitted to students (Patton, 2002; Stuber, 2006). Coding of the interviews was conducted to also identify what themes are consistent and how they deepen the understanding of the students' experiences (Patton).

The coding process was completed in two phases, using an outside reviewer each phase. After the first round of interview questions were transcribed, I reviewed the responses of each person and began to create a list of codes for each question for all 15 participants. The list was a bit un-manageable; so I tightened up the coding and sent the data, a sample of observational notes, and potential second round interview questions to a peer debriefer. At that point, we discussed the coding and direction of the research. After the second review of

transcripts, I had just over 60 themes that were derived from the questions asked and over 100 codes (Appendix I). Some of the answers to my questions had as few as one code. For instance, in talking to women about going to college only one code emerged – "always go" - due to the fact that each woman interviewed thought they would go to college. In contrast, other questions had as many as twelve codes. For instance, when I asked the women to define "Rho Beta material," a dozen different responses emerged.

After reviewing the data with the peer debriefer, I then sent the peer debriefer an outline for the data for review with nineteen major themes (Appendix J). At the end of this process, the peer de-briefer examined the outline and provided more feedback about the coding.

Interviews in the second round were shorter by and large, , used for follow up questions, and did not provide as rich a data set as the first round of questions. Using the codes, I identified themes that extended across various social classes and those that did not. At the end of that process a lengthy text document was sent to two outside reviewers with twelve emerging themes. At that point, the suggestion was made that I condense the twelve themes further. At the end of that process four themes emerged: chapter values, language, behavior, and beliefs. Each of these themes was sub-divided into categories in an effort to organize the twelve previous codes that emerged after the second round of coding and to make the experiences of these women more comprehendible. Information from the three women who were not member of Rho Beta, but members of other organizations was used to triangulate codes that emerged from the Rho Beta interviews.

In addition to peer debriefing, other techniques were used during the data collection and analysis processes, such as member checking and sharing my observations with

participants (Carspecken, 1996). I used the second interview to do some member checking, asking participants if I understood and captured previous statements accurately. After the interviews were complete, I shared the themes with two Rho Beta members, one of whom was an interview participant and one who was not, asking them if the themes were a reflection of the chapter. At that point, they acknowledged that they agreed with the findings, though they had never thought of their chapter experience in this way.

Reporting Results

In Walpole's (1998) study of college students, she reported the data by pairing two women that were within the same social class and comparing and contrasting their experiences. Then, she dedicated a portion of her results to themes, like social capital and cultural capital. Stuber's (2006) work with college students was structured similarly. Stuber's data were divided into two sections: upper-middle class students and lower-middle class students. Within the sections, themes emerged between the groups (e.g. what they thought about their counterparts, activities in which they participated). This format is similar to the structure MacLeod (1995) used in his landmark study *Ain't No Making It.* MacLeod also dedicated portions of his book to individuals and reported data through their individual stories, as did Lareau (2003) in her seminal book *Unequal Childhoods*. All of these approaches were considered as the research was conducted. After sifting through the data and in conferring with debriefers, the data was organized thematically.

Trustworthiness

Given my research is being conducted at the institution I attended and within the organization of which I was a member, establishing trustworthiness within my research is

very important. Trustworthiness is described as being “balanced, fair, and conscientious in taking account of multiple perspectives, interests, and realities” (Patton, 2002, p. 575). No credible research advocates biased distortion of data or research strategies that would try to support pre-determined results. Instead, qualitative inquiry requires the investigator to deal with, reflect on, and report potential sources of bias and error. Procedures can assist in establishing trustworthiness like using multiple data sources, triangulation, external interviews, and member checking.

Throughout the research, I used several of these techniques. As described above, I interviewed three members of Panhellenic Council and the Greek advisor, all external members of the group. I also triangulated the thoughts of the women to what I learn from the external members to the group. Using observation of chapter meetings also allowed for an additional data point. I also used multiple data points to establish women’s social class. For instance, I compared zip code data with the information students report about their parents’ income to activities in which they would have participated as a child. Member checking was also used after the first interview was conducted. At the same time, I reflected on my own experiences with three different sorority chapters to try to remain as neutral as possible. It is important to note that being neutral or trustworthy does not mean that I was detached or distant. Patton argues that the researcher voice can also inform research. By writing about my own biases and understanding of social class at the onset of the study, I hope to lessen the chance my own personal biases will impact my findings (Merriam, 1998).

Positionality

It is important for me to acknowledge my personal biases in order to provide a context for my research (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). I am a woman who participated in this Greek organization at this large, public institution. Therefore, I certainly have my own retrospective thoughts on how social class affected my co-curricular experiences. For example, I noticed that especially during recruitment, the possession of social capital and cultural capital were important. Potential members were judged on their ability to make conversation with complete strangers in the chapter and if they could connect with them. It would be very difficult for someone without some level cultural capital to carry on conversations. The potential members were also judged on what type of clothes they wore, their grooming, and if their parents or someone close to them had been a member of the group. Once in the chapter, no one ever talked about money. The only time it came up was when someone was late paying dues. In retrospect, I did not know if any of my peers had taken out a school loan to attend college, if they were participating in work study, or if they were struggling financially. Everyone assumed paying for school and the chapter was not an issue. The lower-middle class was invisible to me. Social class was also an issue when we selected officers. We often looked for the most polished woman to be our President, as she represented us at campus events. We also wanted to elect officers who were not tied down to a job so that they could spend more time giving back to the chapter. A final area in which social class made a difference was with friend groups, or cliques. I ran into a woman who was in the sorority with me over the winter holidays. When I told her about this project, she said that the chapter just had its own cliques. She said we always like one another but just did

not hang out. I felt that the cliques in the chapter were based on several things – academic interests, social patterns, and social class.

As a result, personal bias could be a factor when working with a group with which I was familiar or participated previously. At the same time, my experience provided considerable tacit knowledge about the organization and made access to events possible in ways that would not have been likely than if I were an outsider to the group. Greek organizations are especially cautious about research involving their organizations as a result of recent tell-all books that do not reflect positively on the Greek community.

There are a few ways in which I will try to minimize any bias associated with my previous experiences. Through interviewing sorority members outside this particular Greek organization and in talking with a University staff member, I attempted to balance my understandings and discoveries with others' perspectives about campus and Greek Life. Additionally, I have served as a chapter advisor at two different institutions, one a large, public institution with two dozen women's Greek organizations and another regional four-year public institution with nine organizations. The experiences I had at these organizations were very different than my own experiences at my undergraduate institution. I also now work at a small, private institution with only one Greek organization. All of these experiences will provide me insight into how different experiences within a Greek organization can be.

I am also from South Central Kentucky, one of the more impoverished areas of the nation. As such, I grew up very aware of the disparity within the social class hierarchy. In terms of my own social class positionality, I would subjectively identity as upper-middle class. Growing up, I would have also self-identified as upper-middle class. As a college

student, I never applied for or received financial aid and did not have to work to pay for my education. My father was self-employed; at times the level of economic capital at my home fluctuated greatly. I attended an economically diverse urban institution; many of my college friends were from various social classes.

My interest in studying social class and the Greek experiences of college women stems from a life of experiences when social class made differences in women's success, but was never openly acknowledged as a force of influence. As such, social class needs to be discussed openly and explored. Hopefully this project will meet that objective.

Conclusion

College students who are currently in college are the future gatekeepers of society (Stuber, 2006). As such, it is important to understand how they experience social class and their experiences with social stratification through college. More attention should be paid to the relationship between social class and the college student experience in order to better understand how the two constructs relate and how student affairs practitioners can better serve students from various social classes. This research intends to provide much needed insights to how students' out of class experiences effect their development and life perspectives. Researchers working with the idea of social class should "pay particular attention to the rules for interaction embodied in any field" and maintain a closer "focus on moments of the activation of capital" (Lareau & Horvat, 1999, p. 50). Doing so provides a more accurate picture of how social reproduction occurs and the actual experiences of college students, a primary goal of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of an exploratory study to discover the relationships between social class and how undergraduate women make meaning of their sorority experience. An orientational, applied case study approach was employed. Interviews were conducted with 15 chapter members of a women's fraternity, two fraternity advisors, and one member from three other sororities. Chapter meeting observations, campus and organizational Web pages, campus publications, and organizational materials also informed this work; see Appendix K for a list of data sources.

This chapter provides an introduction to the 15 women interviewed who were members of Rho Beta sorority. Fourteen of the women were asked very similar questions. The fifteenth member of the organization interviewed was the chapter president. I spoke with her for approximately an hour in order to understand her perspective on recruitment and what it takes to be a leader of such a group, and to learn more about her background and experience as president. Since the nature of her interview was different, the 14 women who were selected to participate based on their social class and academic class standing are the main focus of the results. This chapter is organized into six sections. First, an overview of the interview participants and a description of the chapter house are provided, followed by three segments organized around variables of social class: social capital, economic capital, and cultural capital. The chapter concludes with a discussion about how the women defined social class and a look at the sorority as a site for social reproduction.

The Chapter Members and House

All eighty chapter members were invited to participate in this study. Of the eighty members, 51 (64%) returned the required study information sheets and institutional review board forms. From the 51 participants, 14 were selected to participate in the study (pseudonyms are being used in order to maintain confidentiality): Elise, Mandy, Claire, Liz, Stephanie, Lindsey, Kristen, Polly, Gen, Madison, Kate, Katherine, Melanie and Mindy (see Appendix L for a listing of these women and brief demographic information). As previously explained, the president was also interviewed, making 15 total chapter participants. As outlined in chapter three, the women were selected based on how many years they belonged to the chapter and their social class identification, using the Hollingshead index described in Chapter Three.

Economic diversity was a goal of the selection process, as well as having participants with different academic class standing (e.g., first-year through senior students). In particular, the two women who were identified as lower-middle class and the three women who were identified as middle class were invited to join the study. From there, the remaining women were all identified as being upper-middle or upper class. Once the social class demographic of the sample was identified, length of membership played a significant role in participant selection in order to include women who were involved in the organization over varying periods of time. The target was to have four members from each academic class, first-year through senior. The final sample included: three senior participants, Elise, Mandy, and Claire; two juniors, Liz and Stephanie; three sophomores, Lindsey, Kristen, and Polly; five first-year students, Gen, Madison, Kate, Katherine, and Mindy; and one new un-initiated member, Melanie. The president was a junior. The number of third-year students was

particularly low due to membership attrition and lack of economic diversity within that class. When I asked Liz why her pledge class was so small she indicated that two of the women graduated early and a handful of other members decided to no longer participate in the chapter.

In terms of economic diversity, four of the women were classified as upper-class according to the Hollingshead index: Liz, Claire, Gen, and Lindsey. Five of the women were upper-middle class, Kristen, Stephanie, Elise, Madison, and Mindy; three of the women were middle class, Melanie, Kate, and Polly; and two of the women were lower-middle class, Katherine and Mandy. As previously explained, the Hollingshead index was used to place women in their social class status based on information provided on their study information sheet. However, two of the women were placed in social classes outside of their Hollingshead score. Though Katherine indicated her household income at $100,000, her classification was lower-middle class. In talking with Katherine, she described her lifestyle and family, including their occupation. She simply overestimated her family's income as is common for Latina students (V. Torres, personal communication, March 3, 2009). Her parents' education and occupation information resulted in lower scores, given her mother was in prison and her father had been laid off from his factory job. Like Katherine, in talking with Mandy, it also became apparent that she was lower-middle class due to family circumstances, versus the middle class standing assigned by the Hollingshead Index. Mandy was at the bottom of the middle class classification initially.

It is important to explain how outstanding the two lower-middle class members were. While many of the women I spoke with were very accomplished and impressive, Mandy and Katherine were truly exceptional women. Toward the middle of my study, Mandy was

honored by the University faculty and administration by receiving the University's outstanding senior woman award at the institution's Division I basketball game halftime. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in college student personnel. Katherine's mother has been imprisoned, her father was laid off at his factory, and Katherine helped take care of her younger sibling. Katherine was selected as the chapter's outstanding first-year member just before the study began. While all of the women in the study were unique and outstanding in some way, Mandy and Katherine were truly exceptional college students and the only two students in the lower-middle class category.

The Chapter from a Social Class Perspective

The study information sheet data provided a very detailed picture of the chapter's social class standing. For example, for 64 percent of the chapter membership I was able to determine funding sources for school, levels of parental education, co-curricular involvement in high school, parents' occupation, estimated income, and home address. The large number of upper and upper-middle social class members was surprising, especially given the urban location of the institution, moderate admissions requirements, and the rural backgrounds of many women. Members' self-reported statistics reflected overwhelmingly upper and upper-middle class characteristics (see Appendix M for demographic information for the women who completed study information sheets and not selected to participate in the study). Of the 51 women who completed the forms, seventeen (33%) were considered upper-class, twenty-four (47%) were considered upper-middle class, three (6%) were considered middle class; two (3%) were considered lower-middle class; and the social class status of five (11%) individuals could not be determined due insufficient information provided through their

study sheets. No members were identified as lower class. Thirty of the women worked part-time during the school year, almost half of them employed ten hours or less per week. The only person who worked more than thirty hours a week was one of the two lower-middle class participants, Mandy. Of the 51 participants, nineteen (37%) reported using loans to pay for school.

Many of the women recognized the chapter's lack of economic and ethnic diversity when asked to describe the chapter from that perspective. Six of women interviewed pointed out that only a few members came from lower social class echelons. Three of the members from the upper, upper-middle and middle classes simply responded "no" when asked if the chapter was diverse. Others offered explanations. For example, Lindsey said there was "no lower class, maybe lower-middle, but definitely upper and middle [class]." Six of the women said that the chapter was diverse by explaining that there is a very small population of lower-middle or working class individuals, a "handful," as Liz described it, who would be working class.

I asked the women about markers of social class diversity and how they identified economic diversity within the chapter. Work was one indicator of an individual's social class. For instance, Mindy and Madison described the economic diversity of the chapter indirectly, saying "some girls have to work to pay their dues." Clothes were another marker. Katherine explained that "twenty five of the women would be in the Prada bag category…most of the other girls are in the Kohls' category." She, along with Gen, used clothes to identify individuals' social class.

Five of the women really struggled with the question of the chapter's economic diversity. Melanie and Mandy said they did not know. Gen needed help clarifying the

question by asking what I meant by diverse, while Elise and Stephanie paused for several seconds before answering the question. During the interviews, the women would cross their arms or lean away from me whenever questions about money or diversity were raised. As I will explain later in this chapter, the women were very cautious not to say anything that could be perceived as critical or negative about the chapter. They hesitated and tried to deliberately construct their responses to me about chapter diversity. Interestingly, at one of the second round interviews, Liz recounted a recruitment workshop she facilitated between the time of our first and second interviews. At the workshop the women were talking about recruitment questions they should anticipate from potential new members, and one of the questions related to chapter diversity. Liz admitted that diversity was talked about quite a bit, adding that the chapter decided the blanket response was to say, "Rho Beta was not diverse but that every member was unique in her own special way."

The data also were instructive as to the members' ethnic identity and life experiences. Of the 51 participants, all but two self-identified as being white. One of the remaining two members self-identified as bi-racial, white and Dominican, while the other member, Katherine, self-identified as Hispanic. The latter participant was the lower-middle class participant included in the smaller sample of the fifteen chapter members interviewed. Twenty-three of the 51 participants (45%) received instruction outside of school in music, dance, or sports prior to coming to college. Almost half of the women traveled abroad either prior to attending college or as part of an institutionally-sponsored study-abroad experience while attending college. Sixteen (31%) of the students attended a private high school; two of the sixteen attended a Christian academy, and the others attended Catholic institutions. Only

two of the women in the chapter were first-generation college students, one of whom was Katherine.

I asked each of the 14 interview participants about their decision to attend college, and all but one, Mandy, a member of the lower-middle class, responded that it was something they just always knew they would do, many acting surprised by this question. Mandy, on the other hand, thought she would attend a community college first, with the hope of transferring to a four-year institution. Most participants indicated that they applied to different schools and chose to attend this institution due to academic and campus life offerings combined with the financial aid packages they received.

The women were also relatively academically competitive; during interviews academic aspirations and competitiveness were often mentioned by the women. According to the University Greek Advisor, Rho Beta was historically first in Panhellenic grade rankings, with a 3.395 chapter GPA and 11 (14%) of the 80 members earning all A's the semester this study was conducted. In each interview, the importance of grades was articulated in some fashion. Some respondents viewed good grades as "classy," other individuals chose to join the chapter due to its strong academic performance, and others believed that good grades heightened the chapter's reputation. For instance, Gen explained that she chose to join Rho Beta because the president was introduced as an "engineering major during recruitment and not something like interior design," a less academically challenging major. The women I interviewed outside of Rho Beta also supported the idea that Rho Beta valued academic performance. Chapter observations also reinforced this notion. For example, during meetings an annual chapter scholarship banquet was discussed and awards were given out to women

who did not miss class that particular week. The women were very academically competitive with each other and other chapters.

The Chapter House

The chapter house was reflective of the tastes and values of upper and upper-middle class members and alumni. When I asked the women what made Rho Beta different from other chapters, three of them mentioned the chapter house. All chapter meetings, recruitment events, and a Sunday night weekly dinner take place at the chapter house. The house plays a vital part in the Greek experience, and its presentation was extremely important to the chapter. As Kristin recalled when she walked into the Rho Beta house she thought, “this is nice….and homey.” For some it would be very homey; for others it could be quite overwhelming with its leather couches, dark wood furniture and custom window treatments.

As you walk along the sidewalk of Greek row, the first house on the block is the Rho Beta house, a historic, three-story, yellow brick home with enormous Greek letters running down the side of the house indicating the chapter name. As I passed along the walk of the house, I saw little shrubs lining the walkway and a small wind chime in the image of the organization’s mascot. Attention to detail was evident. Arriving at the front porch, I could see the chapter name and Greek letters etched into the beveled glass doors.

The house was impeccably maintained and decorated. As I stepped onto the refurbished hardwood floors of the foyer, to the right I noticed an antique mahogany trophy case with several awards and honors displayed through glass paneled doors. On the wall to the left was a custom-framed rendering of the organization’s large national headquarters office in addition to some other chapter awards. There was also a large staircase with a thick,

ornately carved wooden banister. Typically, a wooden banister like this is not seen in most homes, but perhaps historic public buildings like libraries or upper-class gathering places like country clubs. The first impression when I walked into the foyer was that someone had spent a lot of money on the home. I found this a bit intimidating as I walked in, as the house had undergone significant refurbishment since I was a member.

The same expensive furnishings and thoughtful decoration were experienced throughout the house; it was not just evident in the foyer and parlor to give a first impression. The first-level parlor was filled with overstuffed leather couches with brass tack beading, dark wood end tables and coffee tables, and other sitting furniture made in various shades of the sorority's colors. A large, commissioned art piece hung on one of the parlor walls depicting the organization's mascot that lists names of all the donors who helped to financially support the chapter house refurbishment. There was also a small powder room on the first floor, again in sorority colors down to the hand towels, and a large kitchen. It all went together in a very sophisticated sort of way that was coordinated by an alumna who was an interior designer. The floor-to-ceiling windows were adorned in custom window treatments and wood blinds. To complete the classic look of the home, crown molding ran along the twelve foot ceilings.

The second level of the house served as a meeting space and residential area. There was as a large room with hardwood floors and decorations in chapter colors including custom plaid window treatments with the organization's mascot embroidered into the fabric. This room could easily accommodate 80 individuals and was used primarily for chapter meetings. The residents of the house used the bathroom and bedroom space on this floor as well. The

third floor was entirely living space. A total of eight members lived on the third and second floors.

Attention to smaller detail was noticeable inside the house, as well. Everything had a subtle but deliberate spot. On the coffee tables were hand-made organizational scrapbooks displaying snapshots of the recent past. In the scrapbooks were pictures of smiling women dressed up at formal dances, giving hugs to each other at social events, and participating in competitive programs like intramurals or skit nights held by fraternities. On the end tables, awards and pictures of the women participating in community service events, sisterhood retreats, or recruitment events were proudly displayed. A newsletter developed by the campus Panhellenic Council, the Greek organization governing body, sat on another table. This impeccable presentation could be attributed to the house cleaner who visits once a week, to the women who take great pride in their chapter house, and to the alumnae who help support the home financially.

The organization members demonstrated great pride in their house. For instance, during an interview, Elise noticed a small tear in the fabric of a chair she was sitting in and gasped at the sight and pointed it out to me. Another member referenced how much money was spent on the furnishings and that alumae wanted it maintained. Several members mentioned how at home they felt when they walked in the doors of this house during recruitment. Again, those remarks struck me as important given not everyone would feel at home with beveled glass doors, mahogany and leather furniture and hardwood floors. I would agree the house, though impeccable, does feel homey with the warm colors, dark woods, and over-stuffed couches. However, the house could also be extremely intimidating to someone who had not ever been in a place with such fine furnishings.

The décor and appearance of the chapter house provided indirect evidence of the emphasis the chapter placed on economic, social, and cultural capital. For instance, economic capital was emphasized through the expensive furnishings. Social capital was evident through the commissioned art piece with alumnae names who had donated to refurbish the home and the interior designer alumna who helped to put the house together. Cultural capital was evident through the type of furnishings and décor selected. During participant interviews and in observing chapter meetings and other events, the women reflected those same values, emphasizing economic and social capital as most important during our conversations.

Economic Capital

As explained in Chapter Two, economic capital plays the largest role in determining the social class to which class a person belongs. *Economic capital* refers to property, capital, and financial wealth a family or individual possesses (Bourdieu, 1987). The women interviewed in this study talked often about property, what they had and did not have with very fine gradations between possessions considered upper-class and upper-middle class. Included in the discussions and observations surrounding economic capital were: recruitment, personal appearance and presentation, cost, including paying for membership, and the importance of human capital.

Recruitment

The importance of property began with the recruitment process before the women became members of the organization. As explained in Chapter Two, official recruitment for the chapters at this university occurred in late August, the week prior to the start of the academic calendar. Though these interviews were conducted six months after recruitment,

the intersection between the process of formal recruitment, economic capital, and social class was addressed often during the interviews. For instance, Madison and Katherine said they lacked much of the tacit knowledge and financial means needed for recruitment in terms of clothing and accessories. Neither Madison's nor Katherine's parents were members of a Greek organization, so they did not have the necessary information or tacit knowledge to successfully navigate sorority recruitment alone. Madison realized this and relied on an older high school friend who had gone away to college the year before to help her pilot the system. Her friend provided her with valuable advice Madison would not have known otherwise, and she seemed to grasp that this tacit knowledge impacts one's recruitment experience. Her friend told her to "make sure to wear pearls every day," advice that left her conflicted. Madison indicated that she felt like a fraud and very unsure of herself: "So here I was with my t-shirt and pearls. I asked her one day, I was like, 'Can I wear diamonds?' and she was like, 'No, pearls.' And so I was like, 'Okay.'"

Katherine, a lower-middle class woman, told me about her issue with shoes. Katherine explained that "everyone has a nice outfit" to wear during recruitment, but some of the extras, like shoes, were beyond her means. She described accessories as a "big deal," with a lot of women wearing boat shoes (Sperry's) that cost approximately $65.00, a figure she could not afford. Katherine admitted that before the recruitment process she did not even know the name of the shoes the other women were wearing. Madison also touched on the importance of accessories. She mentioned that all potential members were asked to leave purses outside of the sorority houses before attending a recruitment event, which relieved the pressure experienced by the young women who could not afford expensive purses. As Stuber (2007) writes, lower-middle class students often feel marginalized on a college campus;

recruitment emerged as a time when lower and sometimes middle class students felt marginalized due to their lack of economic capital. Other sorority events and requirements of membership were not mentioned nearly as often.

Participants frequently described appearance and presentation as influential during new member recruitment events. In fact, seven (50%) of the fourteen women listed appearance or presentation as one of the reasons for choosing this particular sorority. Katherine went on to explain that "women who have the opportunity to look cute" do better during recruitment, adding that the economic background of some potential members prevents them from being able to dress or present themselves in such a way. Consequently, it was, she said, very difficult to "look the part" during recruitment. Katherine also observed that women who work do not have sufficient time to carefully choose outfits and spend much time on their hair and make-up prior to chapter events. Wealthier members, on the other hand, can "choose" how they want to "present themselves."

Sorority recruitment is a process that could potentially marginalize women who do not have certain possessions, the time to look the part due to family or work obligations, or the tacit knowledge to know about such things. While the women were provided with basic information about what to wear during recruitment, this did not suffice. Women who were not part of the upper-class echelons did not have the economic capital to feel included in terms of dress during recruitment in addition to struggling with the wherewithal to know about the importance of things like pearl earrings.

Presentation

After women joined the organization, the importance of possessions and appearance did not end, though it did not seem to be as emphasized. Attention to outward appearance was extremely noticeable at chapter functions, through conversation, and informal observations. During my first formal observation of a chapter meeting, I entered the house with two members, and one was complimenting the other on her knee-high brown leather boots. The woman wearing the boots said casually that she saw them at a local department store and purchased them on-line for $150, excited at the bargain. Later that same evening during the formal chapter meeting, a woman said to another member, "my first memory of you was about your shoes. You had the cutest shoes on, they were ruffly and fun. I match your personality with your shoes."

As members entered into the meeting room, I immediately noticed members' attire. Four or five women had on knee-length black skirts and button-up blouses with high heels, reflecting attire often worn in offices or other professional settings. Three other women wore knee-length print skirts and tops with dressy sandals. A handful of women, the most casually dressed members of the group, were clad in what looked to be loafers and khaki pants with casual but trendy tops, allowing them to maintain a business casual look. All of the clothes were very stylish. In addition to the high heeled shoes, several women wore ballet flat type shoes. Three women had on flowing tops with leggings underneath. Many of the women wore big jeweled earrings, and several wore pearl earrings. Additional accessories such as headbands and necklaces were worn by many. Most all of the women carried an organizational planner published by the chapter's national headquarters. Overall, the chapter's appearance was very professional and polished, but some would consider the

women's apparel a bit over the top for a student organization meeting. Rho Beta prescribed clothing, referred to as "badge attire," whenever members wear the chapter's pin. At such times, inappropriate attire includes jeans, tube tops, and shirts that show midriff.

While not all of the members' clothes looked particularly lavish, they were very trendy outfits, carefully crafted from head to toe. A student unable to regularly shop in trendier stores (or lacking transportation to get to them) would not fit the picture of the women in this chapter. Those unaware of the trendier stores would feel especially excluded. A woman with little free time due to other responsibilities would not have the time to coordinate this look and therefore would not fit in either.

When talking to the women about appearance, they expressed knowledge of the trendy stores, differentiating between those that were more and less expensive, reiterating the fine gradations between upper and middle class possessions. As Gen explained, "There are cheap stores like Charlotte Rousse and Forever 21 that allow girls to look cute but not have to spend a lot." As Elise, an upper-middle class member explained, "You can spot a pair of J. Crew flip flops versus a pair from Target, but Target's gotten kind of cool lately because a lot of people wear it." There is a definite awareness among the women about how nice their clothing and accessories are. Stuber (2007) also found these fine gradations between material items in her research with college students.

When I spoke with the chapter advisor, I wanted to get her thoughts on the wardrobe I observed during chapter meeting. She indicated that over her ten years of advising, this group of women was particularly into a more "professional" versus "business casual" look. She indicated that the professional dress was "what's proper," and if members did not dress appropriately for the meeting they were forced to wear a robe to cover up their clothes. None

of the members mentioned the robe. The Greek advisor also noted that most of the women in this organization and other Greek organizations highly valued outward appearance, adding that Rho Beta women, among other groups, typically wore classic, clean, but trendy outfits and haircuts.

The indirect cost of keeping up with the chapter members in terms of appearance would be difficult for most students. More indirectly, having the time to shop, put together such outfits, and accessorize would be difficult for someone with work or familial obligations. Outside of the indirect cost of time shopping and putting together outfits, the women mentioned more direct costs, which emphasized the importance of economic capital within the chapter.

Costs

Katherine explained that Rho Beta is one of the more inexpensive Greek organizations, adding that she only could afford to join Rho Beta and one other group on campus. In talking with the Greek advisor, I learned students must pay $30 for recruitment early registration and $50 for late registration. Some could argue that the women who may not know to anticipate the recruitment process pay more. According to two members, the first semester of membership is the most expensive, with the women paying two one-time fees totaling just under three-hundred dollars. Chapter dues can be paid once a month or at the beginning of a semester. If students pay at the beginning of the semester, they receive a 15% discount. When I asked the women about the cost of membership, I heard different costs associated with dues, but the two students from the lower-middle class knew the exact cost: $194.75 per semester with the 15% discount. This level of specificity differed greatly from

Gen, an upper-class member, who had no idea what dues were. In reviewing the chapter budget, dues covered costs associated with formal dances, recruitment, basic operating costs, and fees to national headquarters. House Corporation dues paid each semester were $110. This fee went toward debt service on the house, the housekeeper, and upkeep for the home.

When asked about costs of membership, the women rarely talked about dues. Instead, more than half of them talked about t-shirts (to see a full list of costs stratified by social class, please see Appendix O). There were t-shirts designed for each fraternity week, for various Greek life events, and for chapter events like formals. As Lindsey explained:

> You can always buy t-shirts and luggage clasps and favors and more t-shirts. But that's not necessary and you don't miss out on really anything if you don't have a t-shirt. So I mean you could probably buy 10 t-shirts a semester and spend that money if you wanted to, but you don't have to.

Polly felt a bit more pressure to buy the extra items, saying "Well, you're expected, you know, to buy t-shirts and that kind of thing, which I bought a lot…last year but I vow to myself not to do that this year."

Other hidden costs also were mentioned including outfits for recruitment or dresses for formals. As I waited for an interview to begin, I was sitting in the chapter house leafing through a J. Crew catalogue that I found on a coffee table. In the catalogue was a pair of khaki shorts that were circled in pen with the word "rush" beside them. The shorts cost over $60.00. After the interview, Gen looked at the magazine too and made mention of the cost of the shorts, adding that she hoped she wasn't expected to buy those. Polly talked about costs associated with everyday interactions. She explained that the activities with women in the sorority are the same as those shared with her friends who were not members of the group.

However, she said such outings are “exaggerated if you’re Greek.” When I asked what she meant by this, she said that she goes out to eat, but goes out to eat more with her sorority sisters. She said she enjoys shopping, but shops for cute outfits a lot more than her friends who are Greek.

When asked if the women knew others in the chapter who struggled to pay for dues, five women indicated that close friends had mentioned something about this. Four women said they know some women have a difficult time paying dues because they work all of the time, which indicated to them that they struggle. As Claire explained, “I have met a lot of people that are working their butts off to be able to pay the dues in here. So I mean that shows a lot. They’re very dedicated people.” Stephanie said she realizes that people struggle from her own personal struggle. Lindsey, an upper-class student, said people have a hard time paying chapter dues because, “it’s not that they don’t have the money; it’s that they waste the money they do have.” Lindsey was extremely out of touch with what it would be like to struggle to pay dues.

Although most women knew someone who struggled financially to meet membership obligations, the women agreed that money is not outwardly discussed very often in the chapter. Lindsey said:

> There’s only two people in the chapter that would know about your financial standing, and that would be the two people that collect money, like the house [corporation] or the person who collects money for like the dues and stuff.

Melanie indicated that it should be discussed more; she wasn’t sure how much membership cost until the end of recruitment. As she explained:

> [I] went [to recruitment] for two nights -- came the first night and made the cut. Came the second night, never mentioned a word about money. Um, called me and told me I didn't get in. Then two weeks later they called me back and said somebody else had dropped that they would like for me to come. Do I want to accept the bid? Yeah. There was no word about money. So, then I finally asked -- you know – "Are you all going to tell me what I (laugh) what I owe, when I owe." Which I knew that I would be able to pay for it. So, that it wasn't -- it wasn't like I need to know what I'm going to owe so that I can say if I'm going to accept the bid, but it wasn't brought up until way after I feel like it should've been.

There were only two examples of outward discussion of dues: in setting up payment plans and in announcements made by the chapter treasurer. If a member cannot pay, the chapter provided payment plans. However, if members were not financially current, they could not attend events or order t-shirts. In the other example, Gen mentioned that the chapter treasurer will read a list of names at a meeting, and everyone knows that it refers to the women who are behind in paying dues. She said the treasurer does not specifically indicate the list's purpose but asks these women to stay after meeting. Aside from this activity, the overall sentiment of respondents was that the chapter officers were typically discreet, flexible, and understanding in handling issues surrounding money.

I also talked with both the chapter and Greek advisors about the costs of membership. The Greek Advisor explained that as a woman sits in a meeting and the sign-up sheet for t-shirts passes her by or if the group decides to wear a certain t-shirt on a certain day to promote an event, she may feel left out if she does not sign up. She added that the cost of dues is marginal compared to the incidentals, noting that women do not understand such

financial commitments when they join the group. When I asked the chapter advisor about the extra costs and fees, she replied that it relates to the dues structure; she often talked to the leaders about increasing dues so that members aren't "nickeled and dimed" all the time. A few years ago, for instance, she asked the chapter to consider raising dues by several dollars to include formal favors and other incidentals. The sorority leaders however highly contested it.

In discussing how women paid for membership, six women indicated that their parents pay for chapter membership. Of these six women, three were upper-class students, one was upper-middle class, and one was middle class. Two women said they used money from their summer jobs to pay dues, and four women said they worked during the semester to pay for their dues. Two women who were identified as middle class and upper class indicated that they had savings accounts they used, and one lower-middle class member and one middle class member said they used residual money from scholarships. All of the members have some way to access money, and they seemed to lack awareness of what it is like to not have access to funds.

In order to gauge if the experiences of members were different based on their individual level of economic capital, I asked how a member's experience who struggled to meet her financial responsibilities may differ from one who does not face similar financial hurdles. While their explanations varied, all but one of the participants indicated that there would be some differences. Polly and Kristen replied that those who struggled appreciated being in Rho Beta more because they have to work harder to maintain membership. Gen and Liz said it would be different because Rho Beta would be viewed more as a stressful "financial obligation," especially for those balancing work and membership. When

discussing how the experience may differ, Mandy and Katherine, who were classified as lower-middle class, expressed sentiments of frustration. Mandy was unable to participate in chapter-sponsored events due to work. She said the other members who do not have to work, and are often leaders within the chapter, set event schedules. She explained that they did not understand how much notification and time it took to ask off work. Katherine mentioned a sense of frustration stemming from members whose "daddies throw out the money" for items that may be harder for someone with fewer financial resources to procure. She also indicated that the women who were fortunate to have parental financial support did not realize how different it is for those who have to pay their own way, adding that this experience was not intentional on anyone's part. She indicated that the women, while they take it for granted, did not intentionally flaunt the fact that their parents financially help them. Elise was the only member who said being in a lower social class made no difference. Her rationale was that "everyone makes the same friends, pays the same dues, and goes to the same formal," making, in her eyes, the experience the same.

As previously explained, I also talked with both the Greek advisor and chapter advisor about the intersection of economic capital and the sorority experience. Unlike the majority of the chapter members interviewed, both advisors indicated that for most members, the membership experience would be the same regardless of social class. However, they acknowledged, student employment does hinder the experience. The chapter advisor indicated that if women joined Rho Beta with "sisterhood as a goal" the experience would be the same. However, she noted that if they joined to find leadership experiences and are required to work two jobs, they typically are not selected for leadership positions because the other members see them as not having the time.

This brings up another investment: the human capital individuals infuse into the organization. In addition to the financial expenses, chapter membership also required quite a bit of time. When asked how much time activities involving the chapter take in a given week, the responses varied. Two women mentioned as many as 15 or 16 hours per week, with another saying four hours. The bulk of respondents said that Rho Beta typically requires five to ten hours a week for the typical activities, which included the weekly chapter meeting, intramural events, practice for the Greek sing competition, and study hours. However, the time allotment did not include campus activities outside of Rho Beta like student government or other campus organizations, in which members are highly encouraged to participate. Additionally, if a woman falls below a 3.0 GPA in a given semester, she is assigned to monitored study hours in the library. Intramural participation is completely voluntary, but the entire chapter is expected to participate in the Greek sing. The Greek sing competition practice involved several hours each week during the spring semester.

I asked the participants if there were members who cannot meet the expectation to attend some events. Six (43%) of the women said yes, due to work obligations. Five (36%) of the women said it was not due to work but rather poor time management. Surprisingly, this response cut across class lines. When I asked Mandy, one of the lower/working class participants, this question she said that people do get "frustrated" when others do not participate.

I asked the women if those who cannot participate in most events were regarded differently; the responses did not vary across participants' social class lines. Nine (64%) of the 14 women said that women who did not attend as many events were viewed negatively. For example, Polly said "I catch myself saying to others that I haven't seen them around and

it demonstrates their dedication to the chapter." Kristen said, "You're not respected and trusted because we don't know them as well." Elise provided a little more of a balanced response, saying, "We keep track of who comes to what…if nobody did anything it wouldn't be good but we also try to understand if you have a legitimate reason due to work or school."

The Greek advisor explained that when women sign up for recruitment, they do not initially understand the time it takes to be an active member. She said the potential members are provided with a calendar about recruitment and minimal events but have no idea about all the minor requirements and how much time it takes to make friends. Instead, women who work a large number of hours struggle to attend only mandatory functions that are not much fun and miss out on the more intimate social opportunities that are more enjoyable and perhaps more beneficial. She wished that when potential members asked questions about time restraints and working, that the current members would more clearly indicate the time demands.

Dedication to and involvement in the chapter are often rewarded by being selected to serve as a chapter officer. When talking to the women about who chapter officers were, they indicated the officers had "proven themselves" and demonstrated their "love" for the chapter. The officers were also described as "responsible" and "organized." It would be rare that a woman who struggled to attend events and struggled financially would be asked to serve in a leadership position.

Social Capital

As explained in Chapter 2, *social capital* is the ability of individuals to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social constructs (Portes, 1998).

Being a member of Rho Beta is itself a form of social capital. However, the chapter infrastructure did much more to emphasize the importance of networking across campus to secure both individual benefits and benefits for the larger chapter. When asked about benefits of membership, the women quickly provided numerous examples, told me specific stories, and provided me with anecdotal suggestions of possible benefits which are provided below. One of the two most frequently mentioned benefits was social capital, though that term was not used specifically. A list of all benefits broken down by social class is in Appendix P. Overall, the responses about benefits did not differ across class lines.

Though no one used the term social capital, phrases such as "networking," "giving you an edge" or "connections" underscored the prevalence of this concept in terms of how the women experienced membership. Most of the women interviewed had either received a job or knew of someone who had obtained a job through being a member of Rho Beta. For instance, the women have a babysitting network made up of Rho Beta alumnae. If an alumna needs a sitter or summer nanny for her children, she calls Rho Beta and a connection is made. Another example that two women provided related to enrolling in a professional graduate program. Liz's father wrote a recommendation letter for another sister applying to dental school; the father was also the president of the university where the dental program was housed. While the woman undoubtedly had outstanding scholarship, a letter from the university president would only support her effort. Another young woman talked about an internship she received in marketing. While she does not work for an alumna of Rho Beta, it was a former member of Rho Beta working at this firm who notified the chapter members of the opportunity. These are just a few examples of the social capital the women receive

through membership. Other examples included friendships, connection to campus, academic support, and alumni networking which are further explored.

Friendships

Friendships were cited as a benefit of membership. Kristen talked about Rho Beta being the "support system beyond all belief." Some members talked about having a group of women who were looking after their best interest. Polly said "there are 80 women who will help you with anything and you trust them." When asked how important loyalty is to the group, all of the women said something similar to "extremely important." Elise added that a lack of loyalty and trust would "destroy the core of the group." Most of the women felt loyalty to one another and said that loyalty was at the heart of being a Rho Beta, reiterating the idea of enforceable trust through the power of community (Portes, 1998). The women were loyal to one another and held accountable for their actions, returning favors, and working to ensure the individuals' and thus the group's best interest.

When I asked them about what they liked about being Greek, all of the women mentioned something socially oriented, and this did not differ across social class lines. In terms of the social benefit from membership, four women, like Stephanie, mentioned, "having people to do things with." Katherine mentioned especially liking "dinner together on Sunday night." Liz said "you are guaranteed to know someone everywhere you go [on campus]," and two other women mentioned "friendships." The organization in its most fundamental state was perceived as a forum for members to engage in activities that aided in fostering relationships. Through these experiences the women interacted with different

people, gauging their own social capital, expanding it, and then reaped the rewards that came from participation in the organization.

Many of the participants also talked about developing an identity and recognizing how others used their Greek experience to actualize their own identity through these relationships. Five women said they enjoyed going to places on campus and seeing other Rho Betas or Greeks. They liked seeing women who were part of their group at events or in the cafeterias; it made them immediately feel a part of campus and special. Specifically, many of them mentioned having recognizable items they liked to display on campus such as sorority bags and t-shirts with the organization's Greek letters on them. This afforded a great sense of satisfaction; as Madison explained, she finds pride in "showing off that I have a group of friends I love and who love me." Some women felt so strongly about what they liked about their Greek experience that, when asked about it, they responded that they liked "everything."

The women also appreciated being a part of something larger than them. When asked about what they liked about being Greek, Melanie said that it was great to just have the ability to "root for a group." The word "love" was used frequently in conversations among the women and in the interviews. One of the meetings I observed included a senior send-off ceremony. All of the seniors were recognized through chapter officers telling stories about the members' contributions, and then other members contributed through their own stories or actions. There were tears, hugs, and many comments about them loving one another.

All but one participant indicated that Rho Beta was the vehicle through which they made friends when they came to college. Mandy explained that she joined the organization after her first year of college; so she already had a friendship group. Two of the women went

so far as to use the word “family” to describe Rho Beta. These close friendships undoubtedly made the women feel as though they mattered and had a sense of belonging on campus (Dixon Raye & Chung, 2007; Schlossberg, 1989). The women definitely cared for one another.

I asked the women if friendships ever developed along economic lines. Two members indicated that money played a role in chapter cliques initially but eventually individuals’ economic backgrounds make little difference in forming friendship groups. The president, an upper-class junior, cited “immaturity” as a reason why women may have initially placed more emphasis on material possessions, adding that members form friendships because they attended the same private high school or wanted to be associated with women with certain cars or clothing. When discussing cliques within the chapter due to social status the president said:

> Once people get older, mature more… they start realizing that Rho Beta is so much bigger than that, college is so much bigger than that, they -- and especially like looking up to seniors and getting to know like older girls in the chapter…I feel like those cliques will still be there as far as the closeness, but that’s when the girls realize, you know, these are all my sisters, you know. That’s when, I think, respect comes for everyone else, when they get a little older and like they mature, after their freshman year…high school students put a lot of emphasis on the cool kids and…popularity is huge. And so, you know, when freshmen come in, a lot of them still have that mentality and they don’t realize it’s a completely different ballgame. Freshmen cliques are a lot more noticeable and a lot more prevalent, and I think it’s just because

these girls come in with that mentality of they just left high school with a very, very close group of girlfriends and they want that again.

Similarly, Kate, a middle-class first-year student, mentioned that the younger women focus on materialistic issues but that it "does not matter to the older girls."

All participants but one indicated that other factors influenced social circles or cliques within the chapter; approximately half of the participants said pledge classes often socialized within themselves. Because the pledge classes all initiated at the same time, consisted of women who typically were the same year in school, and had several required meetings and gatherings just for them relationships formed naturally. However, within pledge classes there were some smaller friendship groups, and the rationale for their formation varied. Reasons such as party habits, orientation to scholarship, and individual relationship with fraternities were given as influencing social circle formation within pledge classes.

Many women also indicated residence was a factor in friendship formation, which supports Douvan's research. First-year students typically formed friendships with others in their same residence hall. Some women were described as the "University Park Girls" due to residing in campus housing with that name. To gauge whether or not residence halls at the institution may also reinforce social class groups, I reviewed materials provided by the college: residence hall prices range moderately, with University Park costing $400 more for the year than other halls. Though the price difference was not what I would call significant, these women were singled out from others.

For juniors and seniors, off-campus housing played a role in friendships; there were several clusters of women who rented or owned houses near campus. One group rented a house two blocks from campus while two groups of women lived in homes purchased by

parents and subsidized the cost by renting to friends. To investigate potential influences on social class standing, I visited one of these homes and viewed the other from the outside. Each is a moderately sized older home in a working class neighborhood, as most of the neighborhoods around campus would be considered. The house was decorated similarly to other college student apartments with hand-me-down furniture, futons, and pictures of the women at Rho Beta events. In one of the interviews, Katherine associated the purchase of homes by parents with "big money."

Other groups of women rented apartments or homes, with the cost comparable to residence hall rates (with slight increases for food and utility bills and the cost of gas to and from campus). The University and chapter Web site did not list the cost of living in the chapter houses; however a senior member said that it costs roughly $300.00 a month.

The women did not commonly form friendships with other women outside of the Rho Beta chapter. However, the women occasionally enlarged their social circles as they progressed through school, in most instances after the first year of school. For instance, Claire, an upper-class senior, shared that it was not until her last year in college that she befriended anyone outside the chapter. She described it as "branching out" and indicated she was very "proud and surprised" that she cultivated such strong friendships with members of other groups because it seemed most organizations wanted to "keep to their own sorority." While the women did keep to themselves, I did not collect much information that would support some of the more negative forms of social capital described in Chapter Two, such as downward leveling norms (Coleman, 1988). Due to the emphasis on academics and the importance of using alcohol appropriately, the culture of Rho Beta was not necessarily countercultural to that of the larger institution. However, given the amount of time the

women spend together, the chapter could at times limit members' individual freedom (Coleman).

Time spent at meetings, required events, and social functions appeared to enhance Rho Beta members' relationships with one another; the chapter definitely had very strong social capital networks. Because of the closeness of the chapter, social norms were easily reinforced and connections through one another were easily identified. There was even an officer of the organization called the sisterhood chair who organized social events just for the chapter women to bond. Kristin said she was mainly friends with Rho Betas because she just "felt more comfortable around them." Given that the chapter is not very economically diverse and that the University's Greek advisor explained other chapters may come from different social class backgrounds, the argument could be made that the women of Rho Beta typically only cared to associate with one another in order to maintain a certain social status, a form of bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000). The argument could also be made that various chapters could consist of women from specific social class backgrounds, with Rho Beta members being from the upper-class and upper-middle class.

Participants who were not members of Rho Beta reinforced this idea as well, describing Rho Beta as being very close to one another and less involved with other Greek groups. Another individual described them as unfriendly and uninterested in being friends with women in organizations. She explained that they were:

> …more quiet to me, I think they're kind of like in their own like little kind of group. So I kind of -- it gives me more of a stuck-up impression because I don't see them….But because they're kind of segregated a little, it makes me think that maybe they kind of have that personality just a little bit…..Because I don't see them making

> efforts with even my sorority. Like they don't attempt to, like as a whole, like want to interact with us. And I don't see them like in the Greek community doing that with other organizations either. Like sometimes I feel like they're kind of separate because they're like themselves.

The Rho Beta senior's description of "branching out" is consistent with the other sentiments; Rho Beta does not emphasize relationships across organizations or relationships with students outside Greek life or their own chapter. When I asked the chapter advisor about this, she explained that the reason Rho Beta women did not make more friendships outside of Rho Beta is due to convenience. She explained that almost every night there is something the women can be doing with one another like attending an intramural event or a dinner night where women cook and have dinner together.

Melanie, a middle-class, first-year member, described her first impressions of the sorority. She was first introduced to sorority life as she attended a University-sponsored first-year leadership retreat. At the time she was not a member:

> When I was at the freshman LEAD Retreat (a first-year leadership organization), I remembered how the girls in Rho Beta only hung out with each other. I was a little jealous of that. Now that I'm a member I can see why they did that because you have so much in common and you're so excited about being in this group that all you want to talk to is other members of the group.

Melanie did not initially think sorority membership was "for her" but after experiences like this one and after seeing other leaders on campus and meeting women in her classes she was sold on the idea of being a member of this "premiere" organization, as she

described it. This member's impressions of Rho Beta constituted a driving reason for her to participate in Panhellenic-sponsored recruitment activities and subsequently be invited to join the organization. Rho Beta's recruitment was the only organization's recruitment party she attended, and she did not initially make the final cut for membership. It was only after another woman who had been invited to join declined the offer that Melanie gladly accepted the bid to be a Rho Beta.

Polly, one of the middle-class students, answered similarly to all the other participants in insisting that cliques are not very prevalent within the chapter, but she expanded upon her answer in a unique way. She implied that the entire Greek system is, in essence, a socio-economic clique compared to the rest of the University student population. She responded that:

> Like (pause) I think once you become Greek and you become in a chapter that masks everything else, when you are either small town or low class or redneck, or whatever you want to call yourself. I think Greek takes precedence above all that and so you become Greek first.

In response I asked if being Greek masks social inequalities, and she said that:

> I think it equalizes the playing field as far as background and economic status because when you are sitting in that room, I don't sit across and think that that person has less money than I do. Like to me, they are all—it's all Greek.

To gauge the salience of this concept for other chapter members, I incorporated the topic of masking economic inequalities during the second round of interviews. All but one of the participants agreed with the idea, but only one had really considered this before. Perhaps

most of them had not previously considered it because most of the participants were members of the upper, upper-middle or middle class.

A specific item like wearing a Greek t-shirt masked social inequalities substantially, Stephanie explained. Several of the women talked about t-shirts and their role in creating social and cultural capital and recognition of the Greek-brand, very similar to the idea of institutional cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1983), only instead of a diploma on a wall, it is a t-shirt with fraternity letters on the front. Elise indicated that a fraternity or sorority shirt costs ten or fifteen dollars while a shirt from Hollister, a high end clothing store for teenagers and young adults, would cost three times that. She indicated the Hollister brand costs more to perpetuate than the Greek-brand and the connections became more powerful because one is identified as having something in common, at first merely a t-shirt but eventually a larger and potentially more powerful concept.

Campus Connections and Navigation

Joining Rho Beta in the early fall as classes began gave the women an immediate connection to campus with involvement on campus often also noted as another benefit of chapter membership. The social capital attained from such involvement heavily influenced the members' perception of her Rho Beta experience. Every woman I spoke with said that Rho Beta meetings and emails kept them informed of campus events. During one of the chapter meetings, several women took turns announcing or promoting opportunities on campus such as running for student government or acknowledging those who had earned a prestigious position on campus, such as an orientation leader. Women seemed very interested in positions because of the promotions by fellow members; their announcements also spurred

action by members more likely to become involved due to the influence of another Rho Beta member. Kristen specifically said being a member of Rho Beta helped her to "be more confident in leadership roles on campus." She was more likely to seek positions that required election or selection processes that expected high levels of campus involvement or skills because she has developed those in the sorority through her network of relationships and positions in the chapter.

The chapter stressed the importance of being involved not only within the chapter but on campus, defining involvement as participation in campus events like intramurals or by being a member of student organizations such as student government. Rho Beta undoubtedly provided the chapter members with social capital in the form of information channels about involvement opportunities on campus (Coleman, 1988). When I asked the women to tell me a little about themselves by way of introduction, ten (71%) of the fourteen women used activities to describe themselves, telling me about involvement at either the high school or collegiate level. Clearly these activities were tied in to their identities. Some students used involvement as a way to differentiate between students who were Greek and those who did not join a Greek organization, indicating that the former were much more involved on campus. Many of the women indicated they decided to join a Greek organization as a vehicle for becoming involved. Three members, one lower-middle class student and two middle class students, who joined after their first semester, said that being Greek was the only way to become really involved on campus. Mandy, who joined Rho Beta her sophomore year, said she envied all the activities Greek students did her first semester, saying she "was jealous of sorority girls, their bags and meetings." She saw them running for positions in

student government and hanging out in the cafeteria and at other functions, and she wanted that for herself.

I also discussed the benefits of membership with the Greek and chapter advisor. The Greek advisor really viewed the main benefit of membership as learning how to navigate the campus, a source of social capital saying, "You learn who to go to for what [from being a member]." For example, she said that she has experienced women who are pre-med joining a particular group because they saw older women in the organization who were preparing to go medical school and trusted and depended upon them for help in navigating college and for the tacit knowledge and skills that would help them progress.

Rho Beta ensured members' chapter and campus involvement through a participation points system, and one of the members of the organization served as the "points chair," tracking and maintaining this elaborate system. The women received points for involvement in various events, including community service programs, campus activities, chapter-related and fraternity-sponsored events. If a woman did not acquire enough points, she could not attend the end of semester formal, an event every member wanted to attend. In looking at pictures around the chapter house, formals were typically held at a country club, boat club, or museums; the women wore formal dresses, and their dates wore business or business casual clothing.

Elise described the point system as a means to "ensure people are contributing to the chapter and making it a solid group." A member with responsibility of monitoring the points system indicated that while the officers try to understand members' obligations outside the organization, members are often judged by their level of involvement in the chapter. As part of my research I attended some campus events and reviewed campus publications (for a

complete listing see Appendix K), and documents which reflected that Rho Beta members were the presidents of both Greek honor societies and vice-president of the student government association.

Through both intentional systems like the point system and more tacit systems such as recognizing particular members for their on-campus achievements at meetings, involvement is a prescriptive and effective norm of the group (Coleman, 1988). Being involved is supported socially and reinforced by internalization, status, and other rewards. It is effective in that the norm of being involved related directly to individual action. While norms can be limiting (MacLeod, 1995), I did not perceive that the women sacrificed more worthwhile events, like studying, for the sake of being involved. Because scholarship was so highly emphasized in the group, students appeared to maintain a good balance of scholarship and involvement, which is not often the case with overcommitted students.

Academic Support

Another form of social capital that emerged as important to the sorority experience was academic support. The woman discussed the ways in which Rho Beta provided academic support, much of it social in nature. The women talked about how nice it was to have someone with whom to go to the library or study. For instance, Mandy explained, “I always knew I’d have someone to go to the library with. I always knew there would be someone there.” A number of the women also signed up for classes together and studied together. Younger members talked about support they received from juniors and seniors who talked to them about good and bad professors. As Lindsey explained:

> My big sister is pre-dental and she was really involved in the pre-dental society. And now there's younger girls that are now in the pre-dental society and are getting involved in that because of her connections with it. And her connections with certain professors are helping the young girls get connections with those professors and those research projects.

Most of the women also discussed a very organized study file system. As a woman completed a class, she compiled all of her tests, quizzes, and notes and submitted them to the chapter. This counted toward the points required to participate in the formal. Madison mentioned "being forced" to talk to her professors due to her participation in the chapter. New members had to provide documentation of class attendance and mid-term grades; so they must approach their professors about providing this documentation to the chapter. This particular member said she would have never approached a faculty member before but now feels more confident doing so because Rho Beta required her to do so.

Alumnae Mentoring

Another form of social capital came in the form of alumnae mentoring from an academic and employment standpoint. As Lindsey explained:

> A connection that I can have -- we have alums that are psychologists and involved in psychology things. Like they have psychology backgrounds. And so because I know about them through the alum chum project that I worked on last semester, I can connect with them and they can help me connect with like what I need to do here.

Claire explained:

> Alums try to help you like with jobs and all these different things. They're asking if they need any kind of work they'll reach out to Rho Beta members. I guess the opportunities -- I mean there's just always something coming up, whether it be an alum finding something out or another member that has something going on.

While not every participant had frequent or consistent contact with alumnae, there was a real sense of a network all over the city that was a source of support.

Cultural Capital

As defined in Chapter Two, *cultural capital* is the "institutionalized attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials used for social and cultural exclusion" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 156). Often, this form of capital is tacit in nature and most often passed along from parents to children as they grow-up. It can be an appreciation for things like art or music and personal skills like conversation making, among other things.

Though participants never used the phrase cultural capital, recruitment is an instance where the women discussed the importance of this form of capital. The upper-class, upper-middle class, and middle class women commonly mentioned conversation skills, appearance, and personality, with five women (36%) specifically mentioning the ability to connect through conversation as an important skill to have in order to be successful during recruitment. For instance, in talking with Lindsey about deciding who the chapter selects as its members she said the women would not fit in if they were "awkward when they have conversations with us." Gen offered the same sentiments when I asked her about why she considered Rho Beta for membership saying:

> There was just no awkward conversations between….you always just felt like you had something to talk about and like they kept it at the right pace and stuff. To where at some of the other houses, it might have just been [a] different atmosphere.

Six women (43%) mentioned personality, with three using the phrase, "the way you carry yourself" to explain personality. When I asked for clarification about the phrase the "way you carry yourself" Gen explained that meant you "exude confidence." Further going on to explain women will not be invited to join Rho Beta, "if you are completely nervous and really quiet and look down a lot and just can't keep eye contact with anyone." Confidence was seen as very important, and being outgoing and upbeat were also pivotal. Mandy and Katherine, the lower-middle class women, did not refer to any of the aforementioned qualities. They just discussed direct contributions the person would make to the chapter. Perhaps this is because Mandy and Katherine struggled with the other qualities the women described such as small talk and the confidence they exuded during recruitment. They may have only mentioned contributions since they are two very active members and brought a lot of experience and talents to the chapter, or it could be that they do not see the other factors as important.

Benefits in the form of cultural capital, or the knowledge and experiences people have had through the course of their lives that enables them to succeed more so than someone from a less experienced background, were not highlighted. In talking about the recruitment process, many of the women mentioned the importance of conversation skills. The chapter hosted workshops in preparation for recruitment with an emphasis on conversation skills. While most women talked about the importance of conversation in recruitment, no one seemed to appreciate or recognize this training. In asking another alumna of the group what

benefits she received from membership, and she responded that she learned more about making conversation through recruitment than anything else she ever did. She has been able to draw upon those experiences while attending work functions and other social events.

Perhaps these women took for granted the experiences in which cultural capital can be gained like recruitment or through organizing events or working with alumni, or perhaps no one pointed out how wonderful these opportunities are, making them unaware. Perhaps they thought everyone organizes and participates in such experiences or they were embarrassed to mention this. The alternative reason why cultural capital was not mentioned also may be that cultural capital is not gained by many of the members. With so many of them coming from upper and upper-middle class background, the women simply may already have these skills and knowledge. As a member, I know I benefited greatly from being exposed to these events.

I mentioned to the Greek and chapter advisors that the women did not mention cultural capital as a benefit of membership. The chapter advisor suggested that many of the women in the chapter come to college with experience in such activities as helping to plan and other events, so assistance in this area is unnecessary. The Greek Advisor echoed these sentiments. I suggested that intentionality in providing members with conversation and event planning skills, as well as explicit discussion regarding the value of such training may help undergraduate members recognize the role such workshops and experiences can have on their own personal and professional development. Both women admitted that alumnae mentors and advisors could do a better job emphasizing the importance of such skills.

The Sorority as a Social Reproduction Site

As previously discussed, the process of recruitment emphasized the importance of an individual's appearance, clothing, and accessories. In addition, there were other factors that served as a vehicle for social reproduction during the recruitment process. Rho Beta was very intentional in its recruitment efforts as to select members who met a pre-determined set of criteria which was determined by current members, resulting in a pool of new members that were very much reflective of the current members' values, background, and appearance. Before recruitment began the chapter's members outlined five or six desirable characteristics for members and used this list to identify potential members. This process was prescribed by the national organization and adapted by the local chapter members. In addition to these stated criteria for selection, participants shared their own priorities for gauging the worth of prospective members. Some of these important characteristics cut across class lines: someone who will love the organization, someone who is genuine, and someone who will fill a void in the chapter, such as women who were athletic help with intramurals, women who were musical help with Greek sing, and members who were smart to help academically. Liz, an upper-class student, explained, "Everyone contributes in a different way. We do talk about individual skills and how they would [contribute during rush]."

The approach of the chapter in selecting its new members and the assessing of their talents and skills is similar in some ways to the social stratification strategies described by Bourdieu (1987). According to Bourdieu, in order to maintain social stratification, social classes should select members while weighing how potential members could contribute to the group. This enables groups to maintain their status while excluding others, allowing a group to maintain exclusivity and status (Portes, 1998). This process is akin to how Lamont and

Lareau (1988) described why cultural capital is needed to succeed in school, particularly the emphasis on potential members' credentials. The more credentialed a woman is, the more likely she is to contribute to the group, helping them maintain their status. For instance, if a woman was president of her high school class, she is likely to bring such an interest and leadership ability to the chapter, making her a likely candidate to serve as a chapter leader, or a leader in the institution's student government. Another example would include academic credentialing. If the woman attended a selective private high school with a solid GPA, she is likely to help the chapter maintain a solid academic standing and/or help other women in the chapter with their grades. The women who were able to do both, be the high school class president and maintain the high GPA at a prestigious high school were the most highly sought after members. If the potential members do not possess these forms of capital, they may not be selected to join Rho Beta.

As an example, some women told me that they try to be very competitive during recruitment by wearing certain outfits and showcasing their highest-performing members. For instance, the most talented women were featured in skits performed during recruitment. Only Mandy, a lower-middle class woman, described this as trying to be exclusionary. Most saw it as putting their best foot forward. When I asked about Greek system exclusivity, I received very mixed reactions. Three women (21%), all from different class backgrounds, needed the term "exclusive" defined. Three others paused before responding to collect their thoughts. Once participants seemed to better understand the concept, approximately half of them described the Greek system as exclusionary, with no difference in the overall reaction to this question along participants' social class. In reflecting on the responses, the women believed a potential member could find membership in one of the six sororities, but not

necessarily as a member of one of the organizations with more social prestige. Gen, an upper-class participant, said that "some chapters may be [exclusive] because everyone wants in them and can't [get in]." Mandy, a lower-middle class member, said that "you can't be selective without being exclusionary" so just by the nature of aspiring to be a selective and high-performing organization, the Greek system is exclusionary. This young woman valued the importance of being selective in order to maintain the chapter's grades, involvement, and leadership. However, the women did not appear to realize that women with those skills are often members of higher social classes, having had the resources to succeed academically, participate in activities after school, and develop leadership skills.

More specifically, most of the respondents acknowledged Rho Beta's exclusivity. Mandy said:

> We dodge questions like this all the time and give PC answers and then when it comes time to talk with someone in the sorority about it, you don't really know… [however] unlike other groups we'll take a risk on a unique girl.

Madison said, "We're not exclusionary, but some might not be Rho Beta material," adding that she chose to join Rho Beta because "you could tell they knew they were better than everyone else." Mindy, an upper-class member said, "We are the best, but we don't check about people's income." Of the many who acknowledged Rho Beta's exclusivity, there were no excuses made for this reality. Gen, another upper-class student, said, "Why would anyone want to be a part of something average?" and added that "on purpose we come off that way (exclusionary) during rush." Mandy, one of the two lower-middle class students, said, "Deep down we know we are [exclusive]."

There were common phrases the women used to describe themselves, issues of social class, and their chapter experiences that perpetuate social class. The first expression used was "Rho Beta material," and the second word often employed was "classy." The second expression that emerged pertained to what the women were unwilling to articulate: anything negative about their chapter or Greek life. On several occasions, the women indicated discomfort in talking negatively about their chapter experiences. All three of these topics are explored in this section, concluding with the language the women use to define social class.

Being Classy & Rho Beta Material

In talking with the women, bluntly stated, they explained that a woman either is or is not "Rho Beta Material." When asked to explain this phrase, over half of the respondents described four critical attributes: being "goal-oriented" and "genuine," having a "good personality," and being "classy." Members also identified appropriate behavior (not getting into trouble and working hard) as a defining characteristic. Three women mentioned intelligence and academic ability, as well, and several of the women noted appearance. It also is important to acknowledge that the group commonly referred to involvement in the campus or the potential for involvement in the chapter as Rho Beta material. Much of these words boiled down to image – the image a person emits and how she represents the group.

Every woman used "classy" to describe the chapter, its members, potential members, or the widely held view or sense of the chapter. Asked to explain what "classy" meant, recurring themes emerged that cut across social class lines. Half of the group mentioned appearance or the way "you carried yourself," and the women also used "sophisticated" and "intelligent" as descriptors. Polly, a middle class Rho Beta member, said it was not "about

what other people think…but…holding yourself well because of inner pride." Claire, an upper class member, described classy as "seeing things most others wouldn't see… [classy] people wouldn't pass judgment but they realize, you know, what's tacky."

Many participants offered thoughts relative to the idea of behavior, particularly practices involving socializing and alcohol; oftentimes these comments were reflective of members' demonstrated individual morals and the values of the organization. The women very much looked down upon individuals who attended parties, drank too much, and then acted inappropriately in public. A disdain for inappropriate behavior was reiterated in most of the interviews. For instance, Mandy said, "Drinking and classy don't go [together]," while someone else described classy as not acting "skanky or like a fool." There is social capital offered to members in the form of obligations and expectations (Coleman, 1988) in terms of appropriate uses of alcohol.

In defining the term classy, several members talked about what classy is not: being overconfident; they then immediately mentioned another chapter on campus, Tau Chi. More specifically, Elise described Tau Chi as strategically trying to be the popular women by always having the University homecoming queen, saying "They need that so that can say they have it whereas we already kind of feel that way [classy] about ourselves." Liz said Tau Chi intentionally used their chapter experiences as "resume builders" to help them obtain jobs or positions on campus instead of emphasizing friendships and lifelong relationships. The Rho Beta members very much resented Tau Chi's intentional efforts to seem "classy" and looked down upon strategic efforts of self-promotion and the hard work Tau Chi put forward. Because Tau Chi claimed "classy" as its mantra, Lindsey, an upper-class participant, indicated Rho Beta tried to use "classy" less as a descriptor of the chapter and its members.

Mandy added that since Tau Chi adopted the use of the word classy, it has become synonymous with "snobby," when that's not what classy is. *Webster's New World Dictionary* (1996) defines "classy" as "stylish and elegant." The chapter embraced a similar definition with its members' use of the word "sophisticated." However, when asked to elaborate on the word classy, the women do not mention stylish, although that is a trait the chapter valued through their appearance and talk about recruitment. Perhaps they do not define classy in this manner to avoid being perceived as over-confident.

I also spoke with the University Greek advisor about the language that used was during interviews, particularly the word "classy." She said the word "classy" has been used in Greek life for some time, as has "Rho Beta material." When she hears that word used by the women, she thinks it related to "a certain sophistication" and the way a woman carries herself as a person who is not "rough around the edges." She added that Rho Beta is a group with a little more sophistication than some of the other groups on campus.

Being Polite

In talking to the women about class and other issues of exclusivity, many struggled to avoid saying anything negative about their chapter or the Greek system overall. Once as I turned off the tape recorder at the end of an interview, an upper-class participant, Liz, asked if she "did ok." When I asked her what she meant, she implied that she wanted to provide honest answers but at the same time desired to portray the chapter and Greek Life in the most positive light. During a particularly difficult question in another interview, Mandy said that she felt like giving "Panhellenically-minded" answers was just "pounded into [her] head so it's hard to say anything otherwise." Consequently, sometimes responses to difficult

questions included answers like “this is so hard; I want to be nice.” Similarly, when I asked the chapter advisor a more difficult question, she said she could give me her “blanket sorority answer” or a more honest one.

This aversion to providing truthful but perhaps critical information makes one question if these women seriously consider issues surrounding social class, exclusivity, and equity. Given their commitment to being polite, not necessarily candid, I saw social class reinforced not only from inside the chapter but by the position of the chapter within the larger fraternity/sorority system, as well as their individual beliefs and assumptions. Many of the women associated being truthful with not being polite or classy, resulting in a lack of honesty about themselves, others, and their surrounding community. In my second interviews, I asked them if they had any reflections about social class as a result of being a part of this study. While many of them indicated they learned a lot during the interview only a few of the women indicated they had given it any thought after the first interview.

Defining Social Class

The women used several different indicators to describe social class that cut across participants’ class lines. A complete list of how social class was defined stratified by participants’ social class can be found in Appendix N. As previously noted, being classy is something the women highly valued and freely discussed; however, the women’s definitions of social class never included the word “classy.” The women primarily failed to recognize how impressions of being classy might perpetuate social class structures in the organization and as a member of a larger Greek community. Instead, when asked about social class, members identified characteristics that tended to describe actions often adopted by their

parents or other societal influences. For example, eight (57%) of the 14 Rho Beta members used parents' professions as a frame of reference, which conveyed perceptions of income and money. Money was the most common response in describing social class. After references to money, a parent's house was often mentioned as an indicator of social class, followed by cars and clothes.

In defining social class, other markers were used. Four women specifically used the term "lifestyle." More specifically, many of the participants talked about an individual's economic struggles or level of financial comfort. For instance, lower class was "living paycheck to paycheck." Middle class was described as "having the things you need" or "not being hard up for money." Upper-middle class was being "comfortable," while upper class was "being well established in the community." When I asked what being established meant, Liz articulated actions like major philanthropic donations and civic involvement.

In asking the women to define social class, distinctions often were made along the lines of student employment, more specifically if a woman had to work while going to school. For example, when asked if the women knew what social class to which others belonged, five women answered by saying that some of the members have to work. This response cut across class lines. Kristen, an upper-class participant, said that meeting some of the women in the chapter "opened her eyes" to students who were working to help pay for school, something she "could never imagine." Working to help pay for college or sorority membership was a definite social class marker. One of the two lower-middle class participants worked, and the other used residual scholarship funds to pay her dues. If a woman were working for more frivolous things (e.g. to go on spring break), and not working as many hours, that was seen differently.

Ten women (71%) defined social class using the terms upper class, middle class, upper-middle class, and lower class. Many of the women differentiated between upper class and upper-middle class, the only true distinction that exists from a socio-economic perspective, given the demographics of the chapter. Gen used the phrase “big money” to describe upper-class and “money” to describe the upper-middle class. More specifically, Gen said she received a brand new Honda when she turned sixteen, so she was upper-middle class. An upper class student would have received a BMW, she explained.

The women made very fine distinctions along the upper-middle and upper-class lifestyle, similar to what Stuber (2006) found in her research. For the most part, students easily articulated items associated as differentiating upper and upper-middle class status, but they did not offer such fine descriptions of anyone below middle class. This is also similar to Ostrove and Long’s (2001) findings that upper-class students could not articulate the differences in the college experience for students depending on their social class while lower and lower-middle class students could. The upper-class student who talked about receiving the Honda was not modest about her car and was even quick to indicate that it could have been much nicer. For a woman from a lower-middle class background, these fine gradations would be hard to hear. While no one indicated this in the interviews, perhaps due to the small number of lower-middle class participants and no working class participants, the downplay of a brand new car or the store in which a pair of flip flops was purchased would be uncomfortable and exclusionary. For the most part, the women very much took for granted what they possessed. The only exception to this would be the two women who came from lower middle-class backgrounds. Only when talking with them did I hear comments such as

"I would love a pair of those shoes or that type of purse, but I could never afford it," as Katherine explained.

Nine of the women defined social class by association with others. More specifically, five of the women talked about neighborhoods. The city in which the institution is situated is financially segregated; many of the women are from this area and very aware of the differences. Katherine indicated that she often felt embarrassed to say that she was from the south side of town, for instance.

Two other factors defined social class: education and the way a person "carried themself." Education played a minimal role in the definition. Only four women mentioned parental education. The other variable mentioned, the way a person carried themselves would have been the closest association with the words classy or Rho Beta material, though neither of those terms was ever explicitly used. Three of the women were unsure about how to define social class and needed significant clarification in arriving at a definition. Several of the women indicated that class is something "everyone notices but is rarely talked about," as Claire explained. This lack of acknowledgement could explain some of the struggles women had in defining social class and talking about its role within the chapter.

Outside of the remarks about education, the women did not use factors of cultural capital such as appreciation for art, music, or food in defining social class. It could be that the idea of social class was so new to the women that they did not have time to make the connection. For example, the women often talked about the importance of conversation skills and confidence but never connected such skills to social class. The women hinted more at social capital as they emphasized the importance of others with whom members associated with, which the chapter values. Five of the women related social class with whom a person

felt most comfortable spending her free time. However, economic capital overwhelmingly played the largest role in defining social class with very fine distinctions resulting to which class a person belongs.

Conclusion

From a social class perspective, Rho Beta is an upper and upper-middle class organization made up of women who felt as though they benefited greatly from membership. They truly cherished their experiences and friendships; it provided them with a sense of belonging through a network of peers who truly cared about their fate. The organization is a social structure that purposefully reinforced the norms of academics, on-campus involvement, being classy, and friendships within the chapter. It provided opportunities for women to gain social and cultural capital, even though the members may not realize it.

In talking to the women about economic differences juxtaposed with co-curricular experiences, many women did not believe that social class affects the Greek experience in any meaningful way. Others, however, saw it differently. The women emphasized the importance of economic capital and social stratification (though not in those precise terms) while noting friendships and associations. The women distinguished between those with "money" and "big money" and do not understand or appreciate how those from a lower SES experience college life. Membership in the organization definitely insulates the sorority women from other campus cultures while providing them with a sense of identity.

The organization also indirectly emphasized some of the members' negative aspects of membership. For instance, social exclusivity and bonding social structures were highly but tacitly employed, making it very difficult for women from lower or lower-middle class

backgrounds to feel welcome, appreciated, and understood. For the most part, the women did not really consider how the lifestyle of lower or lower-middle class students and gave very little thought to the experience of someone who must work her way through school. They pride themselves in being "the best" without thinking about the impact that positionality has on others.

Rho Beta is part of a larger system of social stratification that some felt leveled the social class playing field. From my perspective as a student of college culture, the group structures and normative processes continue to distinguish among its students based on economic means. Rho Beta provided opportunities for personal growth and gains in social and cultural capital, though this was not uniformly experienced or comprehended, much less appreciated, by all members. The women love Rho Beta and what it stands for, which is sisterhood, high standards of personnel, scholarship, participation in campus activities, and career development, which are five of the chapter's six stated purposes; community service is the sixth purpose. While being a member offers women several benefits they could articulate, this social organization and the larger system of which it is a part could yield even more if group membership lifted women up instead of taking women who are already very skilled and sophisticated and building upon them. The first line of a creed each Rho Beta learns upon joining is to "*live above snobbery of word or deed,"* and ends with asking each member "*to have [the chapter's] welfare ever at heart."* It is, indeed, very difficult to balance the two.

In the final chapter, after summarizing the study, I will take a closer look at the intersection of social class and the sorority experience. More specifically, social insulation, human capital, and potential for these organizations will be further

explored. The chapter closes by discussing the implications of the findings of this study and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE : SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on the experiences of 15 women from different social class backgrounds who are members of a women's fraternity at a large, public, institution located in an urban area in the Midwest. The participants had different amounts of university experience and were in different major fields. Yet as a group they had some experiences and characteristics in common, such as appreciating and enjoying membership in the fraternity and other campus organizations, a commitment to academic achievement and acknowledgement of the benefits of college and being raised in families that emphasized the importance of a college education. This chapter provides a brief summary of the study, including the methods, key findings, and conclusions. After this discussion, recommendations for practice and future research are offered.

Summary of the Study

Several factors motivated me to undertake this study. The first was the need for more information about the relationships between social class and the college experience (Duff 2007; Rehm, 1998; Stuber 2006; Vander Putten, 2001). The second reason emerged from my own personal experiences in a Greek organization. As a woman from a rural, impoverished area outside the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky, joining a Greek organization opened a new world to me. I attended events, met individuals, and participated in activities that would not have been available unless I had joined such a group. I wanted to understand the experiences and perceived benefits of other women. A third reason why this study is

important in that all too often higher education is discussed as if it were solely an experience of the middle class. As Olivas (1997) writes, too often the literature considers racial and ethnic minorities to be the same as students from the lower social class. Therefore, professionals working with students outside of the classroom and studying the student experience may ignore the effects of social class on students.

The final reason I studied social class and the sorority experience is due to the literature review I conducted as my interest in this area peaked. In reading Bourdieu's (1987) writings about social class and class structures, the images of a self-perpetuating organization like a sorority readily paralleled the structures Bourdieu describes in French culture in which economic or social classes were extremely stratified. But I did not find a study that looked at Greek life in this way. The only one that came close was Stuber's (2006) work which focused on Greek organizational influence on how students experienced class. However, the experiences of students in Greek letter organizations was not the specific focus of that research and Stuber recommended those groups be the focus of more social-class based research.

In order to conduct the research, I used both qualitative and quantitative measures. A broad picture of the organization was provided by a questionnaire in the form of a personalized study information sheet distributed to all members who were willing to participate. The results gave me a sense of the social backgrounds of chapter members and other demographic information. I then used purposeful sampling to select members from varying social backgrounds and different academic class standings in order to ensure the sample was as diverse as possible from a class perspective and allowed for a sampling of first-year through senior students.

Individual interviews were employed to understand the individual experiences of the participants. Fourteen two-part, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews helped me discover and understand the lived experiences of these students (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Two rounds of interviews took place. Between the first and second round of interviews, an outsider reviewer examined the emerging codes and suggested second round questions. Once final themes were identified, I also checked these themes with two of the organization's members to ascertain their thoughts and reactions. I also used observations of campus events, institutional and organizational documents as well as interviews with advisors and women who were members of other sororities to inform my work.

As explained in Chapter Three, after transcribing and manually coding individual interview transcripts, just over 60 themes were derived from the questions asked and over 100 codes (Appendix I) that offered responses to my research questions. The four primary research questions were:

1. Do the experiences of women participating in self-perpetuating student organizations vary depending on their social class?
2. What does social class mean to the students? For example, are traditional markers of class such as high levels of family income, parental education, and appreciation for such esthetic qualities as fine art and cuisine understood and valued by these women? Or are other indicators such as students' consumption patterns more meaningful?
3. Does this self-perpetuating student organization confer social and/or cultural capital to its members?

4. Does social class affect what they do and think about themselves and others?

Participants' responses to these questions are summarized below.

The relationships between the students' experiences and social class. In some ways the experiences varied and in some ways they did not. The women did not differ in how they explained membership benefits. Upper-class, upper-middle class, middle class and lower-middle class women all listed the same benefits from membership: academic support, social resources, job assistance, study files, networking, and campus involvement. Alumnae mentoring was not mentioned as a benefit by either of the two lower-middle class members, and was perceived to be the least valuable of all benefits. Similarly, the women explained the costs of membership the same way, all listing the same expenses and emphasizing hidden costs such as t-shirts.

In other ways the experiences of students from different socioeconomic backgrounds differed substantially. The human capital required of all members in the form of time impacted lower-middle and middle class students, particularly those who had to work in order to afford chapter membership. The students who worked talked about feelings of unfair treatment and being misunderstood when they had to miss certain organizational events. The women's outward appearance is another issue in which difference was found. Lower social class women talked about not having the right accessories or time to look as "classy" as other members. The upper-class women made mention of differentiating between clothes from high end department stores versus those from less expensive shops.

Recruitment is another area where the experience was often different. Many of the women discussed the importance of the way a woman carries herself and discussed the role

of personal confidence. For a woman who came from a different social class, one in which sorority recruitment is foreign and one in which small talk and casual conversation are not emphasized, recruitment could be a very scary, isolating experience. Two participants discussed how the chapter members wear certain outfits and feature certain members to portray a more exclusive aura. Many of the women discussed that potential new members could find a sorority to join but that Rho Beta may not be one of the groups who would invite them to join. Others indicated that they chose Rho Beta for many reasons, one of them being the exclusivity the group portrayed during recruitment. This sort of "better than" attitude is evident in talking with the women, as I am certain it is to potential new members during recruitment. The isolation a woman who lacks confidence and the right material possessions feels during recruitment would be painful.

Relationship between membership and acquiring social and/or cultural capital. Though they never used the phrase social capital, all of the women underscored the benefits of aspects of social capital as a result of chapter membership. Many of the women talked about job prospects and campus leadership opportunities that networking in the chapter and Greek community provided. A handful of upper and upper-middle class women discussed the importance of alumnae networking, as well. They see alumnae as routes to jobs and other possibilities. Many mentioned that it often helps in interviews if the person interviewing you happens to be a member of a Greek organization, that it gives you an edge. Another aspect of social capital that was not mentioned as often was trust and loyalty. In the second round of interviews, I asked the women about trust and the role it plays in the chapter. All of the women indicated it was a pivotal part of the chapter's success; the women definitely trust one another.

While chapter membership seemed to afford some kinds of cultural capital, the women never mentioned such items specifically when talking about membership benefits. As an observer, I easily noticed how recruitment experiences assisted women in casual conversation skills and how attending large community philanthropic events would make them more aware of the city's social elite and the culture of those events. Nonetheless, the women never mentioned these things. The women also hosted events at prestigious locations like country clubs, museums, and boat clubs, but they never mentioned these experiences as benefits of their membership experience.

The women also did not mention the skills they gained in organizing such events. Some of these women organized social gatherings for over 200 individuals at private third party locations, structured philanthropic events that raised tens of thousands of dollars, and organized and run meetings which allowed them to present and discuss issues in front of large groups. The skills in public speaking, organization, and large-scale event planning that the women likely acquire from these experiences are something many professional adults do not have. Even so, these skills were not mentioned by any members of the group.

The meaning students made of social class. The majority of participants in this study were not conscious of social class in their day-to-day interactions. When asked about social class and what it meant to them, the many respondents either indicated they were not sure what I was talking about, asked several clarifying questions, or said this was a "hard" topic to discuss. Only one participant said she had ever previously talked about social class before due to a sociology class she had the prior semester. Only one of the women recognized how the importance of being seen as classy or being admitted into a self-perpetuating organization perpetuated class. This woman was a senior and one of the lower-middle class respondents

who relayed that she felt as though many of the practices during recruitment were to attract the classier or more desirable women. The women never connected that often the women who come to college campuses with expansive leadership experiences, dressed in the latest fashions for recruitment and are more confident are those women from higher social class backgrounds.

When talking about social class, eight women mentioned money as what separates social classes. When talking about money, possessions were often used as examples like a parent's home, a woman's car and her clothes. Instead of using money, the Hollingshead index uses occupation as a proxy for class, which eight of the women mentioned as indicators of class. The women were comfortable using clarifiers like middle-class and upper-middle class and made very fine distinctions between the two. As previously stated, these fine distinctions like a new Honda (upper-middle class) versus a new BMW (upper-class) would be extremely isolating for a woman without such resources.

Interestingly, nine of the fourteen women talked about friendship associations and affiliations when discussing social class. While this appears frequently in social class literature, I was surprised these finer gradations of class were offered by the students. The women discussed the importance of neighborhoods, suburbs, and who a person felt comfortable being with. This indicator of class would be a direct link to membership in the Rho Beta organization in terms of who the members were friends with and comfortable associating.

If, why, and how often a member worked during the school year also played a large role in the identity of a member's social class standing. Some of the upper-class participants had a difficult time understanding that some members needed a job to pay for school, versus

having a job to pay for luxury items like spring break. And some of the women specifically worked in order to pay for Rho Beta membership fees and social activities. Specifically, five of the women used students' employment status as an indicator of class. Student employment draws a distinction between members' social classes with emphasis on why a woman is working and how much she works. There is a difference between someone who has to work and those who choose to work.

The relationship between social class and how members perceive themselves and others. Regardless of social class, the women studied hard and had fairly clear career and family aspirations. These women also formed close friendships in the organization that crossed social class lines, though the social class diversity did not vary substantially within the group. In talking about what they did in their spare time for fun, there were not significant differences in what the women do for fun. Mainly, they enjoy spending time together. They liked cooking dinner together, going to parties, and hanging out. There were extreme examples, like spring break or summer travel plans, that were articulated as varying based on social class, but on a day-to-day basis, there was little difference. All of the women talked about friendship and sisterhood and how special their relationships were. No matter the social class, the women also wanted to participate in campus activities and chapter events. However, if women had to work this limited the amount of time they had to participate in such events. This also limited the time they have to informally socialize with their sorority sisters. Additionally, all of the women valued appearance and sought to dress in stylish and sometimes creatively affordable ways.

With the exception of one of the lower-middle class participants, all of the women had always considered going to college after high school. Most all of the women's parents

had gone to college. Two individuals who were exceptions to this did not participate in recruitment until after their first semester. Most women joined a sorority during their first year of college, making these women atypical. However, it allowed them to better understand the Greek community and the recruitment system. Two other participants whose parents were not familiar with the Greek community relied on friends to help them navigate the system. Social class appeared to play a significant role in what the women thought about others during recruitment; however, as previously mentioned, they never specifically articulated this. Instead, they talked about the importance of appearance, grades, and previous leadership ability in addition to personal skills like conversation making and their personality. They never connected these characteristics with someone from a high social class.

In reflecting on the relationship between social class and thoughts of self, the women talked at length about how they were as a whole the best chapter on campus, using words like "premiere" to describe the group. However, they never referred to themselves individually in that way. It appeared safer and more polite to talk about the collective group members' positive attributes in aggregate terms instead of individual terms. Talking in group terms seemed make it alright to brag a bit and to have extreme self-confidence in their organization. All of the women valued being classy and polite regardless of social class; however, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the women rarely if ever connected the connotations of what is classy with social class stratification. While one of the upper-class women pointed out that everyone noticed people's appearances and clothes and what is "classy," they would never be impolite enough to say anything about it. Good or bad, all of the women struggled to talk about social class differences or the relationship between their sorority experience and

social class. From an economic capital standpoint, the women with less financial resources did feel marginalized due to a lack of some possessions like shoes and other accessories.

The women also looked differently at their peers who decided to become members of Greek organizations versus those who did not. While ten of the fourteen women agreed that Greek life was not for everyone, four of them indicated that people who were not members of a Greek organization did not join because they cannot afford it. Six of the women indicated others did not join due to false pre-conceived notions about what Greeks are like, using stereotypical words like “partiers” and “stuck up.” Three of the women indicated that people who are more unique, using phrases like “Gothic” or “alternative” were the individuals who would not be candidates for Greek life. There is a definite us versus them perspective that the women used to talk about the Greek community and students who are not Greek. While there would be exceptions, I would agree with the point made by one the participants that the Greek system is in itself its own class of students. Compared the larger campus community the Greek community was seen as an upper-middle or upper class oasis. Within the Greek system are class gradations of particular organization ranging mainly from upper-class to upper-middle class.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. They include how terms were defined -- specifically the term *social class* -- the interview protocol, sample, and interactions with participants. I will discuss these three issues in that order.

Definition of Terms

There is no one uniformly accepted definition of *social class*. Dozens of social class scales exist that consider a plethora of variables. If a different social class scale had been used some of the classifications of the students may have been different. For instance, some scales rely on occupation and education to indicate social class (Hollingshead, 1975) while others rely on other variables like income (Wright, 2000). The scale used could impact the classifications of the women in the sample, which would in turn impact results.

Interview Protocol

Qualitative interviews are often un- or semi- structured. As I conducted the interviews, I tried to be more responsive and less structured in the questions, realizing that the responses would be richer and more nuanced. In retrospect, in order to ensure I answered the study's research questions, I may have relied too heavily on the pre-designed research questions. If more unstructured techniques would have been used it may have yielded different or better data.

Sampling Procedures

Only one Greek organization was used in this study at one institution. Although almost two thirds (64%) of the sorority's members returned the initial study form, which is a solid response, perhaps among the non-respondents were some members who were from more diverse backgrounds. While the institution was an urban institution with moderate admissions requirements, there were very few lower-middle class participants and no lower or working class participants. Having a more diverse sample would have generated a richer data set with a broader student perspective.

Interactions with Participants

The interaction with participants was limited to interviews and observations during chapter or campus events. It would have been informative to shadow students and observe day-to-day interactions. In an attempt to capture some of this, I asked the women to record their thoughts and experiences in a journal. Most of the participants submitted journals, but they were not detailed enough to provide instructive insights into their daily lives.

Conclusions

Given the results of the study, three conclusions are warranted.

First, the members of this Greek organization did not consider social class to be a significant factor in terms of the nature or quality of their experiences with this organization or that of fellow members. Perhaps this is because the vast majority (91%) are members of the upper social class echelons. Only when directly asked about economic issues did the women consider others who were less economically fortunate and how that influenced their sorority experience. While the women did not directly indicate a difference, conversations and observations indicated that there is no doubt that an individual's social class influenced their sorority experience in both direct and indirect ways. For example, the tacit knowledge women had coming to college shaped their knowledge of Greek life, pre-determined if they think the Greek community is something they could be a part of, and provided them with important information about how to navigate the process of Greek recruitment. With the exception of two of the 51 women who completed an information sheet, one of all of the students' parents had completed at least one year of college. Although the women in these groups were socially and economically privileged, they tended not to recognize just how

privileged they were. Further, they do not comprehend how taking their privilege for granted impacts their sisters who were not as economically fortunate.

Second, the members of this Greek organization typically selected new members who were from the same social class backgrounds. As the institution's Greek advisor explained, due to the scheduling of fall recruitment, most of the students who participated in fall recruitment chose to participate before classes began either due to pre-conceived notions, family influence, or personal experiences. The potential members' appearance, confidence, conversation skills, and tacit knowledge about recruitment and membership demands could eliminate students who initially may be interested in joining the Greek community from successfully joining a group. Further, the organization tended not to offer membership opportunities to students who were not seen as having the skills and where-with-all to be a part of this specific group. Once a student is a part of the organization, the time and financial requirements of the group would further eliminate students who were struggling with work demands, family obligations, or financial issues. Students joined the group, and then those who had to work or deal with familial obligations struggled to attend mandatory events, and informally interacted with the other members on a regular basis. The few stories of the lower-middle class women provided this insight, as did the Greek advisor and chapter advisor who directly said there was no difference between the experiences of members based on their social class, but then moments later indicated that women who had to work struggled to become leaders within the organization, make friends, and enjoy the more social versus mandatory functions.

Rho Beta also perpetuated social class standing and social insulation within the larger campus community, while at the same time providing social capital to the participants. Ten

of the fourteen participants indicated many college students would not feel comfortable being in a Greek organization, with just as many further listing stereotypes and affordability as reasons why. A lower-middle class student and middle class student who did not join Rho Beta initially talked extensively about feeling excluded when they were not members of a Greek organizations, indicating that the Greek members socialized together exclusively, sat together in the cafeteria, and carried personalized items letting others know about their membership in the group like book bags or shirts with their letters. By-and-large, the women admittedly did not socialize with other women outside of Rho Beta, and the men they befriended were most likely in other Greek organizations. To an outsider, this was extremely exclusionary.

Once students became a part of the Greek community, individuals from lower social class echelons were considered to benefit from this campus culture divide. To clarify, an interesting perspective offered was that Greek organizations allow students who are not from an upper-social class background to appear to be through their membership. All but one of the women interviewed said that wearing a Greek shirt and attending the functions with other Greek students masked other social inequalities, providing students with faux economic capital or some form of intuitional cultural capital.

Finally, this Greek organization conferred several types of social capital on to its members. Many of the ways in which the group provided social capital was through the close interpersonal relationships of its members which created a cohesive social network. This is very similar to social class as it is explained by both Coleman (1988) and Bourdieu (1987). The social cohesion of chapter members insures social capital can be transmitted and enforced through trust and the power of community, meaning, the women are accountable to

one another. As such, there are a sufficient number of ties between members to ensure an observance of norms among the women. Through group affiliation the women secured resources and social norms (Portes, 1998). The ties in this organization appeared exceptionally strong and dense, which allowed the women to find a plethora of resources within their group, but may have limited them in finding resources outside their organization (Coleman, 1988).

The group also provided embodied cultural capital to its members in the form of conversation skills, fashion awareness, and attendance at and participation in large scale social events. However, as previously discussed, the forms of social capital were discussed much more often by the interviewees in comparison to the cultural capital membership provided.

Implications and Recommendations

In this section I first offer some suggestions for practitioners. These suggestions include that practitioners need to better communicate with students about what participation in a Greek organization actually requires in terms of time and money; that practitioners should work with chapter members, alumni, and advisors to help them better understand and articulate the benefits of chapter membership from a social and cultural capital perspective; and that a discussion should occur about the importance of realizing social class privilege and how to help students realize this privilege, concluding with a discussion on deferred recruitment practices. Lastly, I offer recommendations for future research, followed by some final reflections.

Suggestions for Practice

1. Greek life recruitment publications and new member education programs should communicate realistic financial and time expectations associated with membership, as interviewees pointed out, the actual cost of membership is more than dues, though information about the other expenses are not as readily available. In searching institutional and chapter Web pages and national organization publications, very little information was available about the financial and time implications of sorority membership including basic membership fees. Before formal recruitment began all the first-year women who signed up for recruitment were given a booklet on the ins and outs of the recruitment process. It listed information like all the organizations on campus, their philanthropies, and included pictures of current members. It also provided sample pictures of what the women should wear during certain recruitment events. However, the information about dues was very basic and in some ways lacking. In fact, nowhere on the University's Web site was information about specific costs. In talking to one of the three women who were members of the Greek community outside Rho Beta, she indicated that her organization purposefully inflates what dues are, recognizing that the dues do not cover the majority of expenses. As one of the lower middle-class members indicated, she joined Rho Beta because it has the most inexpensive dues; however, she did not know to anticipate t-shirts, recruitment outfits, and other expenses into that figure.

No information about time requirements was found in any publication. It would be helpful for the women to know that there is a weekly chapter meeting, study hours, mandatory participation in events like the Greek Sing, and requirements about involvement in other campus groups in addition to being in Rho Beta and the other Greek organizations. It

would also assist women who work or have familial obligations to know about optional activities such as intramurals, fraternity skits, and officer positions within the chapter. Women who work and are not familiar with campus life and Greek life, as many women would be, are blindsided by the human capital required for successful membership and a worthwhile experience. Rho Beta and the structure of the recruitment process seemed to assume that the women who seek membership do not work or have such requirements on their time. This is unfair.

There are several ways this education could take place. First, the University and organizational Web sites should include a time requirement section to describe what is actually expected. It could include information about meetings, study hours, and fun social events. Second, information about organizational membership fees also should be accurate. For example, organizations or the institution could list costs associated with living in the house versus in residence halls or off campus, information about costs outside of dues needs to be included such as costs for social events and t-shirts. Information about the chapter's flexibility with paying dues could be highlighted at the same time, describing monthly versus semester payment plans. Last, during recruitment the current members need to be more open about time and financial restraints. One night of recruitment should include conversations about actual costs. This could be done in a group setting or through one-on-one conversations between current members and potential new members.

2. Student affairs practitioners and volunteer advisors who work with fraternity and sorority members should better articulate the benefits of membership to their members, particularly the forms of cultural capital gained from membership. They also need to do a better job helping students realize just how privileged they are. Having participated in at least

a dozen formal recruitment weeks either as a volunteer or member, the benefits of members emphasized are fun and friendships. Chapters could take this to a deeper level in describing other opportunities that the women do not readily realize. For instance, the skills gained from organizing large programs or attending upscale philanthropic events are opportunities that could be discussed in chapter meetings or during one-on-one conversations with chapter leaders. Advisors could invite students to reflect on their experiences and work with chapter leaders to help the organization think along these lines. For instance, most each of the officers within the chapter was advised by an alumna. During their regularly scheduled meetings, such benefits could be something the advisor talks to the officer about – her own reflections – and ways to help the chapter process these experiences at regularly scheduled retreats or workshops. Once the women are active in the chapter, older members and alumnae could articulate these benefits as well. Alumni/ae and advisors, in general, are typically very supportive and could easily discuss the skills and capital students gain through membership.

In addition, more emphasis needs to be given to making members aware of the social class privilege these women enjoy. Many Greek systems host campus wide leadership conferences annually and most national organizations hold similar programs. Workshops that are geared toward social justice and privileged responsibility should be offered as mainstays of any program or conference. However, an annual conference or workshop is not enough. Just as the advisors should talk one-on-one with members about benefits of membership, they should also discuss privilege. This would not be a topic most advisors would be comfortable or familiar with since they are members of the organization themselves; so universities and national organizations should train advisors about diversity, awareness, and how to talk to members' about these topics as part of everyday conversation.

3. College students, educators, and practitioners need to be better informed about issues surrounding social class and the impact is has on the student experience as well as understanding social class privilege, much like one must understand white privilege. By no means is this a new recommendation (Duff, 2007; Rehm, 1998; Stuber 2006; Vander Putten, 2001; Walpole; Wimberly, 2000). However, it is one that needs more attention. In talking to the women of Rho Beta, most had never considered social class in their daily lives, understood the nuances of class, and had not seemed to consider how social class differences impacts others' lives, particularly those from lower social echelons. College classes that center around topics of diversity including social class need to be included. Social class is a very complex, sensitive subject that will not be better understood until formal education includes topics centered on this issue. Informal education like workshops and conferences can also include conversations about social class. Many institutions offer in-house leadership workshops, as do national Greek organizations. I have participated in dozens of workshops and rarely recall social class being a topic of discussion.

Philanthropy could also be used to help members learn about social class differences. Most all Greek organizations list philanthropy to be one of their top priorities, as it was for Rho Beta. While worthwhile, instead of organizing philanthropic activities like beautification projects or raising money for research, universities could structure opportunities for fraternity members to work with under-privileged youth in programs such as America Reads or Big Brothers/Big Sisters. For those students who are unable to participate in such long-term projects, less lengthy initiatives like volunteering at a homeless shelter or food kitchen would be a good starting place.

4. Students would benefit from deferred recruitment practices. Deferred recruitment is often defined by a recruitment process that occurs after the first month of fall classes (University of Georgia, 2005). In practice, deferred recruitment often takes place at the start of the spring semester. Out of 800 institutions surveyed by the North American Interfraternity Conference, 160 (20%), held deferred recruitment (University of Georgia).

Deferred recruitment would serve several purposes. It would allow women who may not self-select to participate in recruitment time to consider that option after become more comfortable on the college campus. According to the Greek advisor, most individuals who participated in fall recruitment did so because they knew someone who was already a member. Deferring recruitment would give the institution time to introduce the idea of Greek life and general co-curricular involvement. Deferred recruitment would help students understand how the recruitment system works, meet and socialize with members of Greek organizations, becoming more familiar with each organization, its purposes, and participation on campus. It would allow potential members time to understand the Greek organizations and which organizations would offer the experience they prefer. Currently, many women make decisions about who may join using tacit knowledge or first impressions. For instance, one of the two lower-middle class participants joined Rho Beta her sophomore year and decided to go through recruitment after having time on campus to see what it could offer her. A middle-class student had a similar story. Second-year students are much less likely to join a Greek organization. Giving them time during their first year of college to adjust would prove to be a less isolating experience for those who lack the tacit knowledge needed and better understand if Greek life is for them.

Suggestions for Future Research

First, more needs to be discovered about the experiences of lower class and lower-middle class college students from a co-curricular standpoint. While some of the research about first-generation college students includes students from lower social-class echelons, most of the studies do not take social class into account. The college experience of lower and lower-middle class students may well differ from their peers in higher social class groups in many ways. Research on social class and the co-curricular experience should include both current students and successful college graduates. Since class was something the participants struggled to discuss and realize in everyday life, including older alumni/ae in a sample would help researchers better understand what, if any, impact fraternity life had on them. It would help researchers see how membership helped them to successfully navigate the campus terrain and any capital membership conferred, particularly those students who were involved in co-curricular activities like Greek life. From older alumni/ae, we could learn about how they gained the tacit knowledge necessary to navigate the social terrain of a college campus.

Second, more research is needed about how Greek life influences students' identity development. Stuber (2006) called attention to this by showing that social class affects friendship groups, co-curricular involvement, academic success, and students' perceptions of others. As I talked to the women, they relayed to me that being a part of a Greek organization automatically supported and/or bolstered and individual's social class image. This is especially true for students of color (Guardia & Evans, 2008). For instance, one student explained that she knew some lower to lower-middle class men from her high school who joined a Greek organization and are now seen differently simply because of this affiliation. She explained this shift by using the phrase of "leveling the [social class] playing

field." Similarly, the study participants explained that a man's social class was often associated with their particular fraternity membership, with some fraternities having higher perceived social class standing than others. Since social class makes up one's identity and because social class was found to be inferred by participation in a Greek organization, both should be studied more thoroughly. However, to accomplish that, a more diverse pool than the one included in this study is needed. More specifically, one would need to find lower and lower-middle class individuals in Greek organization, which may be no easy task.

Reflections on Social Class Reproduction and the Role of Rho Beta

In talking with others about my research, I began to ask myself about the place of self-perpetuating organizations, such as the one studied in this research project, on a college campus. As previously explained, the organization undoubtedly provides benefits to its members: social capital, a sense of belonging, social integration, opportunities for leadership development, friendships, opportunities for philanthropic activities, and memorable experiences, among other things. However, it is difficult to get past the issue of social reproduction that occurs within this organization, and I would argue, others like it.

This organization takes women from upper and upper-middle class backgrounds and perpetuates their upper social echelon image and exclusivity within the larger college campus. Symbols such as the sorority bag, letter shirts, and even where the students sit in the dining facilities help to maintain this sub-culture. The women unintentionally perpetuate this practice in order to maintain a certain status or in order to appear to be the "best" or most selective organization on campus. Rho Beta actively recruits women who have a certain skills set (e.g., a certain set of leadership skills, athletic abilities, or academic talents, etc.) to

also maintain a competitive advantage over other groups. Often these skills are afforded to upper and upper-middle class students. Rho Beta is not an organization that takes an economically diverse group of students and provides them with opportunity.

Only two of the women interviewed in this study met the criteria for being classified as lower-middle class. As a result, the experience of women outside the upper and upper-middle class was limited. However, even with this small sample, it was easy to distinguish their experiences were different from those women from upper-class backgrounds. Katherine talked about feelings of marginalization in terms of her appearance compared to women from wealthier backgrounds. Mandy discussed feeling marginalized because other members do not understand what it is like to have a job that requires her time, making it difficult to attend chapter functions. When asking the upper and upper-middle class women about how their experiences in the fraternity differ from those from lower social class echelons, they did not understand the experiences of members like Katherine or Many, saying instead that sorority membership probably meant more to those who struggled financially. They never acknowledged that these women may feel out of place because of economic capital or the human capital required of most members. I would offer that very few other groups on a college campus would be such a mechanism of social reproduction and marginalize students the way this organization potentially could. When asked point blank if the experiences of the students from lower social groups differed from women with higher social class backgrounds, the advisors perpetuated this idea saying there was no difference but then recanting, explaining that the human capital piece of membership is difficult for women who work.

I would suggest the tradition and culture of Greek organizations is so engrained in the larger culture of campus life, and as national organizations, that even if they were made

aware of this social reproduction phenomenon, they perhaps could not alter their practices if they wanted. And, I suspect they would not want to do this. There are few other groups on a college campus so devout in their ritual, recruitment practices, and traditions. History and tradition are what many organizations like these hang their hat. Altering the recruitment procedure to provide for a more open selection process would be monumental, as most organization have been recruiting women with these strategies for decades. There is also little incentive to explore such change. Greek-letter organizations are typically very competitive; an unwritten purpose is to be as a selective organization. Many of the women interviewed pointed this out. If the organization wanted to win campus events and have the best grades, it would not be prudent to alter recruitment strategies to be more inclusive.

As a member of this chapter at this institution, I was never aware of this intentional social reproduction process. Even after working for a decade in higher education as a student affairs professional and researcher, I would have argued in support of the benefits of Greek membership, and that there is a place for Greek organizations on most any college campus. After conducting this research and examining this organization using a social class perspective, this would be a much more difficult argument for me to make.

Last Words

I undertook this study to better understand the experiences of college students from a social class perspective. I discovered in the process the powerful effects of social class reproduction within a self-perpetuating organization, the sorority. Many people do not outwardly recognize or feel comfortable talking about social class; many consider it impolite to discuss money and other issues associated with class. As one participant pointed out, “it’s

something we all recognize, but never talk about." It is important for us to recognize to social and culture privileges afforded to the upper and upper-middle classes. For instance, they way in which a woman carries herself, makes conversation, dresses or interacts in social situations often leads to unfair judgment similar to the way Rho Beta discriminated between women during recruitment. This sort of discrimination occurs on into adult life. The upper or upper-middle-class way of acting is considered the correct way. Individuals need to acknowledge and discuss this fact of life, and college is a great place to do so. Organizations and structures, like Rho Beta, that perpetuate this sort of judgment need to be critically discussed and analyzed. This research has attempted to do just that and encourage others to look at the college experience from a social class perspective.

References

Barratt, W. (2005). Simple measure of social class. Retrieved online July 31, 2007 from http://wbarratt.indstate.edu/

Barratt, W. (2006). Social class on campus: Nine points. Retrieved online July 31, 2007 from http://wbarratt.indstate.edu/.

Berger, J. (2002). Optimizing capital, social reproduction, and undergraduate persistence. In J. Braxton (Ed.), *Reworking the student departure puzzle*. (pp. 95-126). Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Blau, P. & Duncan, D. (1967). *The Occupational Structure*. New York: Wiley Press.

Bolger, N., Davis, A., Rafaeli, E. (2003). Diary methods: Capturing life as it is lived. *Annual Review of Psychology, 54*, 579-616.

Bonner, T.N. (1986). The unintended revolution in America's colleges since 1940. *Change, 18,* 44-51.

Bounds, M. (2005). Universal access, democracy, and the community college: The legacy of the Truman Report. Paper presented at the Oxford Round Table, Oxford, England.

Bourdieu, P. (1983). The forms of capital. In G. Richardson (1986). (Ed.). *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education.* (pp. 241 - 260). Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1987). What makes a social class? *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, *22*, 1-18.

Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social space and symbolic power. *Sociological Theory*, *7*(1), 14-25.

Bowen, W. G, Kurzweil, M.A. & Tobin, E.M. (2005, February 25). From 'bastions of privilege' to 'engines of opportunity.' *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved July 31, 2007, from http://chronicle.com/weekly/v51/i25/25b01801.htm.

Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976). Beyond the educational frontier: The great American dream machine. In *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of economic life.* New York: Basic Press.

Bowles, S. & Gintis, (2002). Schooling in capitalist America revisited. *Sociology of Education*, 75: 1-18.

Brodnick, R.J. & Ress, M.J. (1995). A structural model of academic performance, socioeconomic status, and spearman's g. *Education and Psychological Measurement, 55*, 583-94.

Caiazza, A. & Putnam, R. (July 2002). *Women's status and social capital across the states.* (Working Paper No. I911). Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved July 31, 2007, from http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/i911.PDF.

Carspecken, P.F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide.* New York: Routledge.

Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 94: 95-120.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Cuyjet, M.J. (1997). African American men on college campuses: Their needs, their perceptions. *New Directions for Student Services*, 80: 5-19.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2003). *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and*

issues. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

DiMaggio, P. & Mohr, J. (1985). Cultural capital, educational attainment, and marital selection. *The American Journal of Sociology, 90*(6), 1231-1261.

Dixon Rale, A. & Chung, K. (2007). Revisiting first-year college students' mattering: Social support, academic stress, and the mattering experience. Journal of College Student Retention, 9(1) 21-37.

Douvan, E. (1981). Capacity for intimacy. In A. Chickering (Ed.) *The modern American college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Duff, J. (2007). Invisibility at risk. *About Campus*, *12*(2), 18-25.

Feldman, K. & Newcomb, T. (1994). *The impact of college on students*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ford, B.J. & Miller, M.T. (1995). The GI Bill of rights: Legacy to American colleges. *Viewpoints*, 1-17.

French, J.R. & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. *Studies in Social Power*. Institute for Social Research, Ann Arbor, MI.

Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gladieux, L.E. & Swail, W.S. (1998). Financial aid is not enough. *The College Board Review, 185(17-20)*, 30-32.

Gladieux, L.E. & Swail, W.S. (2000). Beyond access: Improving the odds of college success. *Phi Delta Kappan, 81*(9), 688-692.

Gose, B. (2005, February 25). The chorus grows louder for class-based affirmative

action. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Retrieved July 31, 2007, from http://chronicle.com/weekly/v51/i25/25b00501.htm.

Guardia, J. & Evans, N. (2008). Factors influencing the ethnic identity development of Latino fraternity members at a Hispanic serving institution. *Journal of College Student Development*. 49(3), 163-181.

Hollingshead, A. (1975). Four factor index of social position. New Haven: Privately Printed.

hooks, b. (1994). Confronting class in the classroom. *Teaching to transgress education as a practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge Publishers.

hooks, b. (2000). *Where we stand: Class matters*. New York: Routledge Publishers.

Hossler, D. & Bean, J. (1990). *The strategic management of college enrollments*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jackman, M. (1979). The subjective meaning of social class identification in the United States. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. New York: Elsevier North Holland, Inc.

Jackman, M.R. & Jackman, R.W. (1973). An interpretation of the relation between objective and subjective social status. *American Sociological Review*, *38*(5), 569-582.

Jones, S.R., Torres, V., Arminio, J. (2006). Negotiating the complexities of qualitative research in higher education: Fundamental elements and issues. New York: Routledge.

Kahlenberg, R.D. (1997). *The remedy: Class, race, and affirmative action.* New York: Basic Books.

Karabel, J. (2005). *The chosen*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Kendall, D. (2002). *The power of good deeds: Privileged women and the social reproduction of the upper class.* Lanham: Roman & Littlefield Publishers.

Kuh, G. (2007). How to help students achieve. The Chronicle of Higher Education. Retrieved June 13, 2007, from http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i41/41b01201.htm.

Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J., Bridges, B., & Hayek, J. (2006). What matters to student success: A review of the literature. Washington, DC: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.

Kuh, G. & Love, P. (2002). A cultural perspective on student departure. In J. Braxton (Ed.), *Reworking the student departure puzzle*. (pp. 196-212). Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Kuh, G., Schuh, J. & Whitt, E. (1991). *Involving colleges: Successful approaches to fostering student learning and development outside the classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Langhout, R.D., Rosselli, F. & Feinstein, J. (2007). Assessing classism in academic settings. *The Review of Higher Education*, 30(2), 145-184.

Lamont, M. & Lareau, A. (1988). Cultural capital: Allusions, gaps, and glissandos in recent theoretical developments. *Sociology of Theory, 6*(2), 153-168.

Lareau, A. (2003). Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lareau, A. & Horvat, E.M. (1999). Moments of social inclusion and exclusion:

Race, class, and cultural capital in family-school relationships. *Sociology of Education*, 72(1), 37-55.

Lemert, C. (2004). *Social theory: The multicultural and classic readings (3rd ed.).* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Levine, A. & Nidiffer, J. (1996). *Beating the odds: How the poor get to college*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Lucas, C.J. (1994). *American higher education: A histor*y. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Lucas, S.R. (2001). Effectively maintained inequality: Education transitions, track mobility, and social background effects. *American Journal of Sociology*, *106*: 1642-1690.

MacLeod, J. (1995). *Ain't no making it: Aspirations and attainment in a low-income neighborhood*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Marsden, P. (2004). Network Analysis. In K. Kempf-Leonard (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of social measurement* (Vol.2, pp. 819-825), San Diego: Academic.

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1848). Class struggle. In C. Lemert (Ed.), *Social theory: The multicultural and classic readings (3rd ed.).* (pp. 37-40). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Merriam, S. (1998). Qualitative research and case study applications in education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

McDonough, P.M. (1997). *Choosing colleges: How social class and school structure opportunity.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

McIlveen, R. (2001). Education is the great equalizer in a democratic society. *IU*

Homepages. Retrieved July 31, 2007, from http://homepages.indiana.edu/092801/text/gonzalez.html.

Newcomb, T. (1962). Student peer group influence. In Nevitt, S., *The American college; a psychological and social interpretation of the higher learning*. (pp. 469-488). New York: Wiley.

Newman, F. (2000). Saving higher education's soul. *Change, 33*(5), 16-23.

NCES. (2006). Profile of Undergraduates in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions: 2003–04 Washington, DC: US Department of Education. Retrieved August 3, 2007, Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006184.

Olivas, M.A. (1997). Constitutional criteria: The social science of common law admissions decisions in higher education. *University of Colorado Law Review, 68*(4), 462-475.

Ortner, S. B. (1998). Identities: The hidden life of class. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 54(1), 1-17.

Ostrove, J. (2003). Belonging and wanting: Meanings of social class background for women's construction of their college experiences. *Journal of Social Sciences 59*(4), 71-784.

Ostrove, J. M. & Cole. E. (2003). Privileging class: Toward a critical psychology of social class in the context of education. *Journal of Social Issues, 59*(4), 677-692.

Ostrove, J. & Long, S. (2001). White women's social class identity and the college experience. Paper presented at the American Psychological Association Annual

Conference. San Francisco, CA.

Ostrove, J.M. & Long, S.M. (2007). Social class and belonging: Implications for college adjustment. The Review of Higher Education, 30(4), 363-389.

Pascarella, E.T. & Terenzini, P.T. (2005). *How college affects students*, 2nd edition, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Qualitative research and evaluation methods. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24,1-24.

Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling alone*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Rehm, J. (1998). Social class and student learning. National teaching and learning forum, 7(5), Retrieved from http://cstl.syr.edu/CSTL/NTLF/v7n5/social.htm

Rudolph, F. (1990). *The American college and university: A history.* Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press.

Ryan, J. & Sackrey, C. (1984). *Strangers in paradise: Academics from the working class.* Boston: South End Press.

Sand, J. K., Robinson Kurpius, S. E., & Dixon Rayle, A. (2005). *Academic stress and social support factors in Latino and Euro-American male and female college students.* Manuscript submitted for publication.

Schlossberg, N. K. (1989). Marginality and mattering: Key issues in building community. *New Directions for Student Services, 48,* 5-15.

Sennett, R. & Cobb, J. (1993) *The hidden injuries of class*. London: Faber and Faber.

Solomon, B.M. (1985). *In the company of educated women*. New Haven, CT: Yale

University Press.

Stewart, A.J. & Ostrove, J.M. (1993). Social class, social change, and gender. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 17*, 475-497.

Stuber, J. (2006). Within the walls and among the students: How white working and upper-middle class college students make sense of social class. Doctoral Dissertation: Indiana University.

Stuber, J. (2007). It's always been a dream of mine to study abroad: Social and college students' participation in the extra-curriculum. Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Conference, New York, New York.

Terenzini, P.T., Cabrera, A.F. & Bernal, E.M. (2001). *Swimming against the tide: The poor in American higher education* (Report No. 2001-1). The College Board.

Terenzini, P.T., Pascarella, E.T., & Blimling, G.S. (September/October 1999). Students' out of class experiences and their influence on learning and cognitive development: A literature review. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*(5), 610-623.

Thelin, J.R. (2004). A history of American higher education. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Tierney, W.G. (Nov - Dec 1992). An anthropological analysis of student participation in college. *The Journal of Higher Education, 63*(6) 603-618.

Ting, S. (1998). Predicting first year grades and academic progress of college students of first generation and low-income families. *Journal of College Admission*, 158, 14-23.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

University of Georgia (2005). Edwards, M. (2005). *A study on Greek recruitment.*

*A*thens: Edwards.

Vander Putten, J. (November-December 2001). Bringing social class to the diversity challenge. *About Campus*, 14-19.

Walpole, M. (1998). Class matters: How social class shapes college experience and outcomes (Doctoral dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1998).

Walpole, M. (2003). Socioeconomic status and college: How SES affects college experiences and outcomes. *The Review of Higher Education, 27*(1), 45-73.

Warren, L. (2007, Winter). Class in the classroom. *POD Network News*. 6-7.

Weber, M. (1909-1920). Class, status, party. In C. Lemert (Ed.), *Social theory: The multicultural and classic readings (3rd ed.)*, (pp. 115-125). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Webster's New World Dictionary and Thesaurus. (1996). New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Weidman, J. (1987). Undergraduate socialization. Paper presented at the National Conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Baltimore, MD.

Williams, R. (1991). *The origins of federal support for higher education*. University Park, PA: The University of Pennsylvania Press.

Wimberly, G.L. (2000). Links between social capital and educational attainment among African American Men. Dissertation: University of Chicago.

Woodard, D.B., Love, P., & Komives, S.R. (2000). Reframing our thinking, reshaping our practice. *New Directions for Student Services*, 92, 17-34.

Wright, E. O. (2000). *Class counts: Student edition*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix A: STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

A. Personal Information

Name _____ Age_____

Racial/Ethnic Background_____ Year in School___

Email _____

Please indicate the highest level of education your parents have completed.

Mother	Father
_____ Less than high school	_____ Less than high school
_____ High school diploma or GED	_____ High school diploma or GED
_____ Some college	_____ Some college
_____ Vocational/technical school degree	_____ Vocational/technical school degree
_____ College graduate	_____ College graduate
_____ Graduate degree	_____ Graduate degree

If your mother attended college or graduate school, please list which institution(s) she attended: _____

If your father attended college or graduate school, please list which institution(s) he attended: _____

Stepmother	Stepfather
_____ Less than high school	_____ Less than high school
_____ High school diploma or GED	_____ High school diploma or GED
_____ Some college	_____ Some college
_____ Vocational/technical school degree	_____ Vocational/technical school degree
_____ College graduate	_____ College graduate
_____ Graduate degree	_____ Graduate degree

If your stepmother attended college or graduate school, please list which institution(s) she attended:

_____

If your stepfather attended college or graduate school, please list which institution(s) he attended:

_____

Parents' Occupational Information

(Step)Mother [or guardian]: Job title; place of employment; kind of work performed

_____
_____

(Step)Father [or guardian]: Job title; place of employment; kind of work performed

_____
Other parental figure (stepfather; stepmother, etc): Job title; place of employment; kind of work performed

_____
_____

Did your mother belong to a Greek organization?
_____

Did your father belong to a Greek organization?
_____

Name of Hometown and Zip Code
_____

Name of High School_____

What was your high school GPA? _____

What was your ACT/SAT scores? _____

What is your current college GPA? _____

How would you describe the neighborhood or community you lived in while growing up? (If there is more than one, select the community in which you spent the most time)
_____ Urban
_____ Suburban
_____ Small town
_____ Rural

How would you identify your family's SES or social class?
_____ Lower-middle class
_____ Middle-class
_____ Upper-middle class
_____ Upper class

Please rank order the sources listed below that you use to pay for college (1 being the primary or source of largest amount). Leave blank any sources that do not apply to your situation.
Parent/guardian contribution _____
Personal savings ____

Grants or scholarships ____
Student loans ____
Work study ____
Off campus job ____
Other (please indicate)_____

If you work, approximately how many hours do you work per week?
On campus _____ Off Campus _____

For this current academic year, please estimate your family's total income.
____Below $30,000
____Between $30,000 and $50,000
____Between $50,000 and $70,000
____Between $70,000 and $100,000
____Between $100,000 and $150,000
____Between $150,000 and $200,000
____Above $200,000

The above estimate is:
___ Fairly accurate ___ A guess

What is your intend major(s)?
_____

What activities or organizations are you involved in?
_____
_____

What high school activities were you involved in?
_____
_____

What lessons (e.g. dance, piano, etc) did you participate in before coming to college?
_____

Have you had the opportunity to travel abroad? If so, where and when did you travel?

_____
_____

Current Information:
Where do you currently live?
_____ On campus _____ Off Campus

Who do you currently live with?
____ Parents
____ Relatives (e.g. siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.)
____ Rho Beta Sorority Members
____ Women in another Sorority
____ Other

Appendix B:Hollingshead Index Scores for Participants

Name	Hollingshead Education Score	Hollingshead Occupational Score	Hollingshead Social Class Score	Classification	Base Salary	Income 1999 (US Census Data)
Elise	5.5	5.5	44	4	50,000	40,037
Mandy	3.5	3	25.5	3	30,000	36,008
Claire	7	7.5	58.5	5	70,000	40,037
Liz	7	9	66	5	200,000	80,634
President	7	8	61	5	100,000	39,996
Stephanie	6	7.5	55.5	4	50,000	32,909
Lindsey	6.5	7.5	57	5	150,000	28,037
Kristen	5.5	6	46.5	4	50,000	48,413
Polly	5	5.5	42.5	4	70,000	36,098
Gen	7	9	66	5	200,000	67,211
Madison	5	7	50	4	70,000	26,976
Kate	5	5	40	3	70,000	29,503
Katherine	4.5	4	33.5	3	100,000	44,608
Melanie	5	5.5	42.5	3	70,000	32,909
Mindy	7	7.5	58.5	5	30,000	66,592

5= upper-class, 4=upper-middle class, 3=middle class, 2=lower middle class

Appendix C: Interview Protocol I

Before interview:

- Greet and thank participant for coming
- Provide participant with a copy of the Study Information Sheet
- Describe the potential benefits of the study (e.g. to contribute to knowledge to the research base about students' experiences in undergraduate education)
- Clarify the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of all data collected

Opening Questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Tell me about your family.
  Prompts:
  - Father's and/or Mother's occupation
  - How many siblings do you have?
  - What are your siblings like?
- Tell me about where you grew up.
- Describe the high school you attended.
  - What kind of kids went there?
- How was it you decided to attend the University?
  - What did you parents feel about you going to college?
  - Did you talk about going to college much with your parents?
- Tell me about what it was like when you first arrived on campus. What were your first impressions?

Objective: Understanding Social Class

- You defined yourself as XX social class. How did you pick that category?
- How do you define social class?

Objective Understanding the campus environment

- How do you compare to the "typical" University student in terms of goals; previous life experiences; values or world view; background?
- Are there some students who wouldn't feel comfortable on this campus? Who are they?
- Tell me about the students here at the University.
  - Are there any differences between the students who are and aren't Greek?
  - Do you feel like you fit in?

Objective: Understanding Participation in the Organization

- Tell me about why you decided to join a Greek organization.

    - How did you know this group was the right one for you?
- I've heard the phrase "Rho Beta Material." What does this mean to you?
- Do think the Greek system is elitist? Do you think it is open to everyone? Is Rho Beta open to everyone or elitist?
    - Is there any kind of Greek system hierarchy?
- What have been your experiences so far in this organization?
    - Do you hold any leadership positions?
    - Are there some things about being Greek you particularly like/don't like?
    - Does the chapter seem cliquish?
    - How would you describe your chapter?

Objective: Understanding social capital opportunities

- What resources does the organization provides its members?
    - Academic support?
    - Social outlets?
    - Connections to alumni?
- Did you know many people at the University before coming?
    - How did you make friends here?
    - How do you know what's going on around campus?

Objective: Understanding cultural capital opportunities

- I've often heard that each house is different. What makes this house different?
    - Do you think there is a personality or stereotype about this particular organization compared to others? Why?
- Tell me what the chapter looks for in selecting its members?
    - Are there certain characteristics the chapter agrees upon? If so, what?
    - Do certain types of potential new members have an edge over others? How?
- Tell me about your friends here. Are most of them in the organization?
    - What types of things do you and your friends do together?
- What are the leaders of the organization like?
    - Are they similar/different?

Objective: Understanding economic capital opportunities

- Would you say that the chapter is economically diverse? How do you know?
    - Do you think women are ever marginalized due to their economic background?
    - Do you think the experiences for women from a lower socio-economic group is different?
- Tell me about the costs associated with chapter membership.
    - How do you pay for dues?
    - Are dues talked about a lot?
    - What happens when a member cannot pay?
    - Are there other fees associated with membership?
- Do you know of women in the chapter who struggle paying compared to others?

    - How do you know?
    - Do you think the chapter experience is different for those women?
- How much time are members expected to dedicate in a week?
    - Are some jobs reserved for certain members?
    - Do some members have a hard time filling the time obligation? Why?
        - How are those members talked about?

Objective: Understanding aspirations

- What do you want to do when you "grow up"?
- Where do you see yourself in 10 years? 15?

After the Interview:

- Thank the participant for their time and contribution to the study
- Let the student know I'll contact them via email about a second interview and explain the journaling activity

Interview Protocol II

Before interview:

- Greet and thank participant for coming
- Clarify the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of all data collected

Objective: Clarifying responses from the first interview

- Do you have any questions for me after we completed the first interview?
- Did the interview make you think or reflect differently on your experiences in the chapter or at school?
- What did you think about the journaling activity?
- One of the participant mentioned that being Greek puts members on a level playing field economically. Would you agree? Could you explain a situation when you've seen that occur?
- Why would exclusivity be important during recruitment?
- What do you think the experience of rush is like for a girl with financial struggles?
- Have you had any reflections about how social class and the Greek experience since we talked?
- How important is loyalty in the chapter?
- Many of the participants talked about a top three sororities and bottom three. What role does social class play in that?
- Are there any specific characteristics about the chapter we didn't talk about before that you think would be insightful?

After the Interview:

- Thank the participant for their time and contribution to the study

Appendix D: Interview Protocol for Chapter Advisor & Greek Advisor

Before interview:

- Greet and thank participant for coming
- Clarify the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of all data collected

Objective: Gain insight into their roles and influence within the chapter

- Tell me about yourself
- Describe your experiences in this position?
    - Have you enjoyed it?
    - Are there parts that are difficult?
    - What are the time demands?
- Why did you want to serve in this position?
- Are there things the University or chapters look for in selecting individuals to fill these leadership positions?
- Tell me about the Greek community?
    - What would you say are its values?
    - Is there a typical member?
- Describe the chapter.
    - What are the members like?
    - What do you look for in selecting members?
- Do you think there is a place for everyone in this chapter?

After the Interview:

- Thank the participant for their time and contribution to the study

Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Panhellenic Council Members

Before interview:

- Greet and thank participant for coming
- Clarify the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of all data collected

Objective: Gain insight into the campus environment and chapter from on outsider's perspective

- Tell me about yourself
- Tell me about the campus
- Tell me about the Greek community?
    - What would you say are its values?
    - Is there a typical member?
- Describe the chapter.
    - What are the members like?
    - What do you look for in selecting members?
- Do you think there is a place for everyone in this chapter?

After the Interview:

- Thank the participant for their time and contribution to the study

Appendix F:Interview Protocol for President

Before interview:

- Greet and thank participant for coming
- Clarify the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of all data collected

Objective: Gain insight into their roles and influence within the chapter

- Tell me about yourself
- Describe your experiences in this position?
    - Have you enjoyed it?
    - Are there parts that are difficult?
    - What are the time demands?
- Why did you want to serve in this position?
- Are there things the chapter looks for in selecting women to fill these leadership positions?
- Describe the chapter.
    - What are the members like?
    - What do you look for in selecting members?
- Do you think there is a place for everyone in this chapter?

After the Interview:

- Thank the participant for their time and contribution to the study
- Ask for permission to send them a copy of the analysis for their review following the study's conclusion.

Appendix G: Example of Observational Data from a Chapter Meeting

Arrived 6:54 pm
I walked in with two other members. One had on knee high brown leather boots. One girl said to the other, I love your boots. She said thanks, I saw them at Dillards and then went on-line to get them cheaper and got them for like 150.00 (like it was a steal).

As I entered the front door the ladies were mingling and two men were downstairs of the house to make announcements to the women about an event on campus. I didn't stay to hear the announcement. I went upstairs to tell the president I had arrived.

When I entered the meeting room the president and personnel chair were at the front of the room getting things set up for meeting. Another officer was going around the room putting pieces of paper on members' chairs (a social sweatpants order form, Order of Omega Greek Choice Awards, Which Type of Member Would you Consider Yourself (a reflection/assessment activity), and a form to turn in community service hours to Greek Life.

The members asked me a question about ritual.

Talked with the head of house corp., about my dissertation, her struggles with her young daughter growing up. She asked me about selling my house (she knew from her daughter, whom I'm friends with that it was up for sale) and how that was going. She offered the second floor of her home should we need a place to stay between moves.

7:06pm
The women entered the room one by one. I immediately tried to note the outfits:
4-5 women had on knee length black skirts and button up shirts tucked in with heels
3 women had one some sort of knee length print skirt and a top
Lots of women had on very high, high heeled shoes ranging from patent leather, open toed, pointed toe, very trendy and fun
1 woman had on Sperry's and khaki pants
4-5 had on khaki pants - the least dressed up women had on khaki pants
Several women had one cute ballet flat type shoes
3 women had on flowy tops with leggings underneath – very stylish
3 women had on dresses that would be suitable for church or dressy party
Lots of big jeweled earrings
Lots of accessories – headbands, jewelry, pearl earrings were worn by several
Overall, the women were very stylishly dressed and had accessorized their outfits
Most all of them carried a "Rho Beta" planner that national headquarters publishes
The women are not allowed to carry purses into meeting due to space allotments
Some of the outfits would have been suitable to wear out to a party

The rest of ritual took place including the reading of minutes.

7:16pm
The reading of minutes from the last meeting included:
Sisterhood retreat information
Formal theme ideas were discussed
Two recruitment workshop dates were set

The President made some brief announcements:

- We need some DDs for formal in two weeks – please sign up
- We will be voting on awards tonight for Greek Top Ten, Outstanding Greek Volunteer
- The state-wide meeting is coming up. The attire is black and white pin stripe. If you don't have it you can wear black or white but to "look nice and presentable because you're representing Beta Gamma" She talked about why the meeting is important, the cost the chapter pays for everyone to attend ($20/person) and if someone said they were going and now can't, they will pay the chapter $20.
- She was disappointed in the lack of attendance at Rho Beta Cares Day because community service is one of the 6 purposes, because we need bragging rights during recruitment, it was fun, and that members have to participate in either Delta's service day or Beta's service day to make up for it.
- Gave out the "secret service sister" award that she got off the nationals Web site resource page along with a "high tech yo-yo" that lights up. She gave it to a young woman who helped a lot with the Greek sing competition costumes.

7:24pm
The Vice President over Academics Gave her Report:

- Passed out Skippy peanut butter jar – each woman gets to enter her name into the jar for a prize if she didn't skip class that week. The prize is candy.
- Referenced the "prof" list and said that they didn't have any good history teachers listed and good humanities teachers and needed some. She also said if you have a bad prof to list it and circulated the list.
- She is planning the scholarship banquet (where members with high GPAs are honored at a restaurant with the rest of the chapter)
- Announced that after the fall grades were tallied, the Rho Beta is number one in cumulative GPA but that the new "all black" sorority is above them. She then said if everyone raised their GPA just a little, the who chapter would be first.
- She announced that she is going to form a committee to review standing rules
- Someone in the chapter asked her a question about what the specific GPA was. Her response was that it is 3.002 for the chapter and 3.3 cumulative.

7:28
The Treasurer gave her Repot:

- Working on budget to vote on before the end of the semester
- Reminded the chapter that they can't attend formal unless they have under a $10 balance
- Reminded the chapter that they can't order formal favors (sweatpants) unless they have a $0 balance.

7:29
The New Member Educator gave her Report:

- Initiation dates for the new members were given

7:30pm
The Secretary Gave her Report:

- She reminded the chapter that unless they have participation points, they can't attend formal and that each person needs to turn in their points
- Senior Week Dates were given along with a review of the activities such as a banner, chalking and members were asked to participate.
- They then led a "senior spotlight" and read some traits about one of the seniors and the members guessed who it was. Someone guessed by the second characteristic "wants to sell pharmaceuticals." From there, girls raised their hands and were called on to say anything they wanted about this senior. Some of the quotes were:
    - "My first memory of you was about your shoes. You had the cutest shoes on, they were ruffly and fun. I match your personality with your shoes."
    - "I remember the night we were going out to eat and you couldn't find anything to wear and you said if you act like you like it then you can pull it off"
    - "You were why I wanted to be in Rho Beta, you embodied it."
    - "I am proud to be your little. I love you a lot."
    - "People get the impression that your head is in the clouds but it's not. I love you very much."
    - "Remember getting trained out in the…..shady part of town to get trained to deal poker" for some event they were participating in.
    - "Remember fraternity parties"
    - "You are driven and focused and studying abroad this summer"
    - Another comment was one I didn't catch and the person then said this was obviously an inside joke.
    - "People don't recognize how involved you are…thank you for doing that and I love you bunches."
    - "I can't imagine living without you (then tears and a hug)"
    - "You are extremely intelligent"
    - When we first started hanging out we talked about how we were first all "scared of each other."
    - Another woman told a story about how she took the same test as this senior and she left it crying as she went down the hall because she bombed it and she got a text message from her saying "I bombed the test." It made her feel so much better and cheered her up to know she wasn't the only one.
    - Another mentioned remembering a fraternity formal.

7:57pm
Panhellenic Chair gave her report:

- Greek Ball location was announced. Tickets are $8 in advance and $10 at the door.

- There is going to be a 5k another sorority is doing – lots of the girls laughed at the idea of participating – not sure if it was because it was a run or because it was that particular group. The panhellenic chair then said, “it would be panhellenically minded” if you participated.

Recruitment Chair gave her Report:
- She talked about the importance of doing things like Rho Beta cares day and frat days, saying, “Bragging rights are important for rush” “It stings when you lose that” “winning Delta day helps with rush”

8pm
House Corp gave her report:
- We each have to pay $25 each if we don’t get 2 girls in the house to live, saying “I know most of you think $25 isn’t much but to some it is.”
- She then gave an award. Each executive officer gives the award taking turns at particular meetings. She honored the young woman who just decided to move into the house that week because it was a difficult decision.

After the officers gave their reports, committee heads gave their reports.

Sisterhood Chair gave her report:
- Another sorority is the sister sorority and they are going to try to go to a baseball game with them and Tau since they are our neighbors. “If anything it’s worth the free food.” And you’ll “get home early enough to do something with other people that night”
- She then gave out the star sister awards given to sisters who help you get stuff done and it is tied to the sorority’s six purposes.
- They also scheduled a sisterhood trip to an ice cream stand in the coming weeks.

8:08pm
Social Chair gave her report:
- She said that people in other groups facebook her all the time and tell her how they want to hang out with Rho Betas because they are “classy and fun” so we need to do some social events.
- She asked people to pass up their formal favor sweatpants form and that she would give them the price tomorrow once she had how many people wanted them.
- She announced that formal is at the city boat club.

Someone asked her about the price of the pants and she said Rho Beta allots $10 per person for each favor and that depending on the number ordered, the more ordered, the cheaper it will be. She said it should be between $5-7.00.

8:13pm
Campus Involvement chair gave her report:

- She said they got 3rd in some event (didn't catch it) and that another sorority beat them because Rho Betas were nicer to the children involved.
- She announced fraternity days and said "attendance at both is necessary so put it on your calendar."
- She announced the time of school baseball games.

- She then talked about the survey everyone had in their chair. She said it was to reflect about what kind of member you are and is this where you want to be. It was an idea they got from SEPC meeting.
- She announced that a national pageant was going to be held on campus– some people laughed and she later said you didn't have to wear a bathing suit.
- She then said she had extra baseball t-shirts they had ordered and if anyone who had paid didn't have it, to let her know.

8:19pm
Career and Development Chair gave her report:
- Announced the College of A&S's Council Election Applications are out and handed those out. Two or three girls raised their hands.
- She then did a game about graduate school entrance exams with the chapter. She asked what the GRE stands for. Once someone guessed, she told them the different parts of the test and why you'd take it. She did the same thing for the GMAT, LSAT, and MCAT.

8:22pm
Community Service Chair Gave her report:
- Announced the blood drive
- Told girls their community service hours were due
- Thanked the FY pledge class retreat for their service project

8:24pm
General Announcements then started.

One woman said: "Greek Week starts tomorrow and I'm in charge please support me and Mandy who worked on it" She went on to list all the other Rho Betas who helped organize Greek Week.

Another woman gave a rundown of all the Greek Week activities and that it's important that "we should them we're the best cause I know we are….Greek games are big and I've already heard how other sororities are going to win things but they've got another thing coming."

Another woman announced that she was selling neighborhood VIP cards for Panhellenic and it'll look bad if we don't sell them.

Another woman announced that we have 2000 Community Service Hours this semester so far.

Another member announced the upcoming intramural events.

8:33pm
They then took nominations for various awards. No discussion took place of those nominated.

Order of Omega Greek Top Ten Results were announced.

8:49pm
Most outstanding new Member Nominations and voting took place

The Greek Ball Queen Nominations and voting took place

8:53pm
Mr. & Mrs. Rho Beta Nominees were given.

9:03pm
Members volunteered to do the standing rules review.

9:07pm
Skippy jar names were pulled

9:09pm
General last minute announcements were made:

The house manager asked sophomores and first-year students to write on a slip of paper why they would not live in the house and pass it forward.

One woman who works in fund-raising explained the school's student giving campaign and said it counts as service hours.

SGA Executive Staff Elections were promoted for people to apply.

Another woman announced that she needs buzzers for an event she's doing this week…asking members for buzzers from games they have.

Another woman reminded the chapter of dance marathon and that dz is winning right now.

Another woman mentioned an art exhibit that several Rho Betas are submitting artwork to and encouraged others to do the same.

Another woman got the Greek week signups back and learned that the same old people signed up for this – not nearly enough. The FY students hadn't gotten it.

Another woman asked the chapter to watch her in the polo match against another school.

Another member asked those that are living in the house this fall to meet after meeting.

The meeting closed with the President apologizing for the length of the meeting.

Appendix H: Journal Activity

Interaction	**Topic of Conversation**	**Who Was Involved**	**Are they in a Greek Org**	**How would you describe their social class?**	**Reflections**

Appendix I: Interview Codes & Themes

The stem of each interview question is provided below followed by a number which indicates which one of the fifteen participants provided the response.

Tell me about yourself

- From (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14)
  - Urban (1, 5)
  - Suburban (2, 7, 10, 12)
  - Rural (3, 6, 8, 9, 13, 14)
- Activities in high school (1, 2, 4, 8, 12)
  - Extra-Curricular (1, 2)
  - Co-Curricular (4, 8, 11)
  - Work (2, 4)
- Academics (1, 8, 9, 2)
- Goals (2, 14, 11)
- Rho Beta (13)
- Major (3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 13)
- Demographics (4, 10)
- Year in school (6, 8, 11, 12, 13)
- Family (4, 12, 14)
- Love to exercise (11)
- Activity Involved With (11, 14)

Tell me about your family

- Parental Occupation (1, 6, 7, 5)
- Relationship with Family (2, 11, 9, 10, 4)
- Demographic Information (2, 4, 13)
- Siblings (8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)
- Family Traits (12, 3)

What do your parents do?

- Hollingshead Level 9 (1, 5)
- Hollingshead Level 8 (6, 7, 13)
- Hollingshead Level 7 (2, 3, 8, 10, 12)
- Hollingshead Level 6 (13)
- Hollingshead Level 5 (6, 8, 10)
- Hollingshead Level 4 (3, 8, 4, 12, 14)
- Hollingshead Level 3
- Hollingshead Level 2
- Hollingshead Level 1 (11)

Clique you were in during HS?

Hierarchical Response (1, 2, 8)
Involvement Centered (5, 11, 9, 13, 14)
Socio-economic (3, 4, 8, 12)
Relationship with Others (2)

How did you decide to go to College?

Assumed they would always go (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

Why U of L?

Economic Reasons (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14)
Social Reasons (10, 8, 2, 12)
Location (2, 4, 5, 14, 13)
Sport (9)
Recommendation (11, 8)
Academic (14)

How parents felt about you coming to UofL?

Positive (6, 13, 9, 11, 14)
Indifferent (10)
Economic (4, 5, 7)

First Impressions of Campus/UofL Students?

Rho Beta Helped Me Transition (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 13)
Other Greek Reference (2, 4, 5, 7, 9)
Positive (9)
Difficult Transition (4, 8, 11, 12, 14)
Diversity (4, 7, 8, 11)
Academics (4)

What is Social Class?

Possessions (1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 13, 14, 6)
Used a classification (14, 1, 4, 10, 11, 5, 6, 12, 7, 8)
Lifestyle (2, 5, 8, 13, 11, 12, 7, 20)
Associations (1, 2, 4, 10, 13, 3, 12, 5, 6)
Unsure (3, 9, 12)
Education/Occupation (2, 3, 4, 10)
Financial Burden (4, 10, 11, 8, 10)
Presentation (8)

Greek comparisons – How subject compares to the Greek community?

Typical (3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13)
Different in some way (3)
Economically (3, 3, 8)
Demographically (3, 9)
Level of Involvement (4, 8, 13)

Socially (6, 7)

Typical student comparisons – How subject compares to the "typical" student

Typical (1, 3, 9, 4)
Different in Some Way (4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14)
Unsure (2)
There is no Typical UofL Student (5, 8, 10, 11, 12)
Economically (3, 5)
Demographically (6, 7, 11, 13)
Level of Involvement (9, 11)
Socially (4, 14, 9)
Academically (5, 14)

Are there any students who wouldn't feel comfortable at UofL?

Yes (1, 2, 3, 12, 14, 5, 10)
No (4, 8, 9, 13)
Demographically (7, 11)
Involvement Level (1, 2, 3, 12, 14, 5, 10)

Are there people who would not feel comfortable rushing or being Greek?

Yes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13)
Economic Reasons (11, 6, 8, 9)
Preconceived Notions (3, 8, 9, 4, 13, 6)
Organizations are Exclusive (11)
Individual Characteristics (3, 4, 5)
Unsure (1, 2)

Are there cliques in Rho Beta?

Yes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14)
    Pledge classes (1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 14)
    Who you live with (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, 14)
    Academic Reasons (1, 4)
    Fraternity Associated (2, 3, 10, 13, 14)
    Economic Reasons (3)
    Social Activities (1, 11, 2, 8, 4)
    Other (6, 11, 8)
No (12)

Is there a Greek Hierarchy?

Disliked talking about this (2, 8)
The top three (2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14)
Yes (4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)
Recruitment based (5, 11)
Winning Campus Events (5, 6, 13)
Membership (5, 8)

Campus Involvement (13)
I had to re-explain the question (10)

Does the hierarchy have anything to do with social class?

Yes, (2, 9)
No (11)

Using the word classy – what does it mean?

Not overconfidence (1, 9, 4, 11, 3)
Appearance (4, 3, 7, 12, 14)
Behavior (3, 6, 11, 12, 8, 14)
Morals (7, 14, 8)
Sophisticated (14, 8, 12)
Intelligence (8, 14)

Is there a label for Rho Beta?

Unsure (1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13)
Other (4, 12, 5, 9, 8, 10, 13)

Is there a difference between Greeks and non-Greeks?

Yes (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12)
Unsure (3, 8, 6, 12)
Economic (9, 11)
Social (1)
Involvement (8, 10, 12, 14)
Academic (1,
No (1, 2, 3, 8)

Why did you decide to go through rush?

Social (3, 11, 14, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12)
Involvement (4, 6, 7)
Recommended (1, 5, 6, 9, 12, 10)
Benefits (9, 11)
Exclusive (11)

Why did you Pick Rho Beta?

Appearance (1, 9, 14)
Presentation (1, 7, 10, 12, 13)
Fit (1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 12)
Values (3, 11, 1, 13)
Academic (1, 4)
Sincerity (13, 7, 14, 12, 4, 1)
Diversity (4, 11)
Best Group (11, 4, 5, 9, 3, 14, 1
Economic (4)

Benefits (4, 5)
Personality (10, 6, 14, 3, 4, 1)
Recommendation (8, 5)

Rho Beta first impressions

Goal oriented (1)
Smart (1)
Pretty (1, 9)
Anyone would want to associate themselves with Rho Beta (1)
Laid back attitude (9, 13)
Seemed truly happy to be Rho Beta (9, 10, 12)

Definition of Rho Beta Material

Fit (1, 11, 13)
Beautiful (2)
Goal Oriented (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11)
Smart/GPA (2, 12)
Personality (2, 4, 7, 8, 10)
Would do anything for you (4)
Genuine (2, 8, 9, 10, 14)
Involved (3, 10, 11)
Classy (3, 6, 8, 12, 14)
Behavior (3, 5, 9, 13)
Well rounded (5, 6, 9, 12)
Good personality (7, 8, 10, 11, 12)

Is the Greek System Exclusionary/Elitist

There's a place for everyone somewhere (1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13)
Yes (2, 7, 8, 9, 11)
Economically (2, 9)
Had to pause before answering (3, 4, 11)
Some organizations are and some aren't (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14)
Pre-dispositions (5, 10)
Some Greeks have a mentality that they are better than non-Greeks (7, 9)
Needed help understanding what the question meant (8, 11, 12)
Appearance (8, 9)

Is Rho Beta Exclusionary

No (2, 9, 11)
Yes (1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11)
This is a hard question (11)

Leadership Positions Held in Rho Beta

No (1, 12)
Executive Council (5, 6, 13, 11)

Cardinal Cabinet (3, 5, 8, 13)
Other (1, 9, 2, 11, 4, 5, 7, 10)

What do you like about being Greek?

Social aspects (1, 2, 8, 13, 14, 10, 12)
Identity on campus (1, 13, 14, 2, 9, 4, 5, 11)
Academics (7)
Activities (11, 12)
Other (8, 10, 13)

What do you not like about being Greek?

Pressure to hand with certain frat (1, 2, 5)
Stereotypes (2, 7, 13, 14)
Competition (11, 8)
Time commitment (3, 11)
Nothing (5, 9, 11)

Describe Rho Beta

Prominent (2, 3, 5, 7, 10)
Familial (7, 14)
Loyal (2, 6, 7)
Has Priorities (3, 5, 12, 6, 7)
Fun (7, 12)
Well Rounded (8, 9)
Open-minded (6, 10)
Put together (5)
Involved (2, 3, 12)
Nice (2)

What are the resources being a member provides?

Helps you get a job (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14)
Academic Support (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13)
Social resources (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 10, 6, 13, 14)
Gives you an edge (2, 14, 11)
Networking (2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 14)
Conversation starter (11, 13)
80 women who will help you with anything and you trust them (3, 10)
Get involved (3, 7, 10, 11, 12)
Study files (4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13)
Volunteering opportunities (4, 12)
Family connections (5, 13)
Rho Beta Web Site (6)
Alumni Mentoring (6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13)
Leadership skills (8, 11)
You can get something from everybody (8, 14)

High Expectations (8, 10)
It really hasn't helped academically (14, 11)

How did you make friends when you first came to college?

Through Rush (1, 5, 7)
Rho Beta (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14)
Residence Hall (2, 6, 7, 10, 11)
Freshman lead (4, 10, 12, 14)
In classes (4, 14)
Orientation (8, 10)
Now that I'm a senior I'm starting to get to know girls in other sororities (8)
McConnell Scholars (11)
Honors (14)

How do you know what's going on around campus?

Through Rho Beta (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13)
Reach (1)
Fliers (1, 13)
Other organizations on campus (3, 4, 6, 12)

What makes Rho Beta Different?

The house (1, 4, 10)
You feel welcome (1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10)
Priorities (1, 2, 3, 8, 5, 12)
Pretty (1)
Prominent (8, 11)
The women are different (5, 11)
Genuine (6, 7, 13)
The personality (8)
Really struggled to answer this question (8)
Involved (8)
Closer friendships compared to other groups (9, 10, 12)
Open-minded (11, 13)
Classy (14)

What does Rho Beta look for in members?

Grades (6, 7, 8, 10)
Secrets I haven't learned (1, 2)
Priorities (1, 2, 3)
Intelligent (1, 2, 3, 13, 14)
Confidence (1)
Someone who tries hard (2)
Classy (2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14)
Prominence (2, 3)
Someone who will represent us well (13, 14)

Involved (2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14)
Internal things that are hard to describe (2)
Appearance (2)
Someone who can fill a current void in the chapter (3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13)
Good Personality (3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10)
Good conversationalist (3, 5, 13)
Genuine (4, 8, 10)
Fits in (5, 7, 8)
Well-rounded (7)
Sisterly (8, 13)
Someone who will love Rho Beta (5, 10, 11, 14)

Do certain girls have advantage over others during rush?

Paused before answering (4, 5)
Yes. (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13)
Legacies (1, 12, 14)
Involvement (5, 6, 7, 12, 10)
If you know someone already in the chapter (1, 5, 12)
People with good recommendation letters (1)
They way you carry yourself (1, 2, 4, 11)
Personality (1, 3, 4, 8, 11, 12)
Good conversationalists (1, 11, 12, 13, 14)
Appearance (2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11)
Ambitious (4, 7)
Those with more opportunity or privilege to be cute (2)
Priorities (3, 5)
Girls with good grades (4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12)
Awards (5)
Community service (12)
Girls who will represent Rho Beta in a positive way (5)
Desirable (8)

Does Social Class play a role in some girls having an advantage?

We give off a myth of high class during rush so it's hard for some girls who aren't the best dressed and it hurts their confidence (11)
You intuitively think the top notch girl is going to be a higher social class (11)
Not really outside of being able to pay for it (14)
Everyone has a good outfit (14)

What do we do during recruitment to exude a certain image?

We have our outfits checked each night and wear pearls (11)
We do this instinctively, not on purpose (11)
Those going through rush think everyone is rich (11)

What are your friends like?

They are Rho Betas (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13)
It's a mix of Rho Betas and people outside Rho Beta (5, 8, 14)

What do you do for fun?

Eat (1, 4, 6, 11)
Movies (1, 11)
Drink/Party (1, 5, 6, 8, 9)
Go on trips (5)
Work out (4)
Study together (4, 8)
Shop (6)
Hang out (4, 6, 9, 10, 12)
Go to the lake (11)
Read (11)
Pedicures (12)

Are the leaders of the chapter a certain type of woman?

Yes (5, 6, 7, 12)
Leaders (1, 3, 4, 5, 7)
Involved (1, 4, 5, 6, 12)
Different types for different positions (1, 6, 7, 10)
Motivated (2, 7, 12)
Smart/Good Grades (2, 12)
Love Rho Beta (2, 5)
They carry themselves a different way (3, 12)
Behaviors (5, 6)
Popular (3)
Friendly (4, 6)
Respected (5, 11)
No (10, 11, 14)
Proven themselves (11)

Is the chapter economically diverse?

Paused before answering (6, 7)
Some girls have to work to pay their dues (2, 9)
No (2, 3, 7)
Yes (1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13)
Unsure (11, 14)
Some members are upper class (1, 14)
Few working or lower class (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 13)

How do you know what social class people are in?

Accessories (1, 4, 11)
Clothes (10, 11)
Travel (1, 3, 10, 11)

Where they live (14)
General Comments (1, 2, 4)
Some people have to work (2, 3, 6, 10, 11)
How they pay for school/Rho Beta (5, 11)
Parental Occupation (5, 14)
Comments a close friend makes (6, 10, 11)

Are there any wealthier cliques inside the chapter?

Mainly the first-year and sophomore girls (4)
Not really (1, 11)

Do women have different experiences based on their class?

What you make of it (1)
Some girls take people with them to expensive places (1)
No, everyone makes the same friends, pays the same dues, and goes to the same formal
(6)
Yes, because you have to work a lot if you're lower class and worry about paying for things…it makes it a lot harder to get involved…a few people have had to drop Rho Beta because they had to work too much to pay for it. It makes it a harder experience" (7)
Paused before answering (9)
Not really (14)

Are members looked at differently because of their social class?

Everyone thinks of it, but you're not judged on it (1)
People ask some things like if I work, but not really (4)
I don't think so (7, 10)
I appreciate it more because I pay for it (10)
Not really but you can tell who has money (11)

What are the costs?

Dependent on buying t-shirts (1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13)
Social Events (1, 3, 11)
Expensive but worth it (4, 9)
House Corp (5, 9)
Fundraising (5)
Fines (5, 11)
Additional Costs (9, 11)
Taking a little sister (11, 12)
Dues (1, 11, 13)

How do you pay for dues?

Myself (1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 11)
Parents (1, 2, 5, 9, 12, 14)

From savings account (3, 13)
Scholarship (14)

If you don't pay dues what happens?
Can't go to formal (1)
Can't buy additional stuff (1)
Announce your name at meetings (1)
Drop Out (7)
Work with EC (4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13)

Are there women who struggle to pay?
Yes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13)
Don't know (12, 14)

How do you know some member struggle to pay?
When a friend says something (2, 4, 5, 6, 9)
They work (5, 6, 7, 9)
Possessions (9, 10)
Personally (11)
I collected fees (13)

Is money talked about often?
No (1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 14)
Yes (7, 12)
Exec Board is very confidential (11)
Should be talked about more so you're aware (14)

Are the experiences in the chapter different for those who struggle to pay?
Yes (1, 4, 3, 11, 6, 7, 10)
No (5)

Are there certain people for certain jobs?
Yes (1, 5, 6, 13)

How much time is dedicated to being in the chapter each week?
It's what you put into it (1, 14)
10+ hours (1, 4, 5, 11)
7-10 hours (1, 13, 14)
3 - 5 hours (3, 9, 2, 12)
As much as you can (7, 14)
Too much (9)

Are girls who can't come to things looked at differently?
Yes (4, 1, 3, 11, 6, 7, 10)
No (5)

Do some women miss things due to work?

Yes (1, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12)
Other (6, 11)
It's a matter of not making time (7, 9, 10, 11, 14)

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Nurse (1, 9)
Teacher (2)
MBA (3)
Coroner (4)
Not sure (5, 10, 12)
Engineer (6)
Psychologist (7, 13)
Student Affairs Admissions Administrator (11)
Doctor (14)

Where do you see yourself in 15 years?

Working (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14)
Maybe not working if have kids (6, 11)
Living somewhere else (5, 13)
Married (1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)
Living close to my family (6)
Have children (2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13)
Living here (11)

Appendix J: Outline of Themes within the Data

I. Picture of the Chapter Overall
  A. Description of the House
    a. Newly renovated
    b. Very nicely decorated
      i. Antiques
      ii. Leather couches
      iii. Artwork
      iv. Window treatments
      v. Dark wood furniture
      vi. Trophies
    c. Homey
  B. Social Class
    a. Majority upper and middle class students
    b. Students' perceptions of social class of the chapter
  C. Appearance
    a. Description of attire during chapter meeting
    b. Attractiveness
    c. Emphasis on appearance during recruitment
  D. Overall persona of the chapter
    a. Being extremely confident
    b. Involvement level is extreme
    c. Differentiating various definitions of "classy"
    d. Socially exclusive
      i. Friends mainly with one another
      ii. Not that interested in knowing other group members
      iii. Unfriendly?
  E. Resume type introduction of members
    a. Including high school involvement as part of introduction
  F. Always knew they would go to college
    a. Academics play an important role it the chapter
  G. The chapter is not obviously segregated economically
    a. One mention of a wealthier clique.
    b. Less obvious ways the chapter segregates economically
      i. Residence
      ii. Fraternity Association
  H. Great hesitation with saying anything that could be perceived as negative
    a. About own chapter and others
  I. Aspirations

II. Benefits of Membership/Resources from Being a Member
  A. Transition to College
    a. Knowing people on campus
    b. Having immediate friends

B. Social Capital plays a pivotal role in the sorority experience.
    a. Women join the organization to get involved
        i. A student needs to be Greek to get elected to things
        ii. The sorority is a way to find out how and when things are going on around campus
    b. Trust and Loyalty are important
        i. Members have "got their back"
        ii. In selecting a member, it needs to be someone who will be loyal
        iii. Members' grades and involvement are seen as not just benefiting the member, but the chapter – high level of accountability to the organization
    c. The sorority helps with job placement
        i. Greek involvement seen as a plus with potential employers
        ii. Alumni networks
        iii. Recommendations for graduate school
        iv. Ties to others members' families

C. Surprisingly, cultural capital is not as important
    a. Conversation skills are important in sorority recruitment. Otherwise, the women mentioned very little about cultural benefits
    b. Formals and dressing up and interacting with fraternity men were also mentioned. However, very few talked about other cultural benefits

D. Academic capital is seen as an important benefit to sorority membership
    a. Test files
    b. Advice on classes and professors, especially in popular majors and classes
    c. People to study with
    d. Informal and formal tutoring sessions

III. Social Class Definitions
A. The importance of "Classy"
    a. Big money versus regular money
    b. The emphasis on classy
        i. Potential members need to be classy
        ii. Etiquette lessons during recruitment
        iii. Kappa Delta sorority
    c. The role of self-confidence
        i. Rho Beta vs. Kappa Delta
    d. Being of high social class and "classy" are different things
        i. Definitions of social class are possessions, financial struggle, associations, if you work, and lifestyle
            1. It's something everyone notices but is rarely talked about out loud

ii. Classy is the way you present yourself
1. Party behavior
2. Pearls
3. Posture
4. Etiquette

IV. Social Class and the Sorority Experience
A. Cost of Membership
a. Upper-class students didn't know how much it cost versus lower-middle class students knew to the penny how much it cost.
b. Members who can't pay
c. Hidden costs
i. T-shirts
ii. Social Activities
iii. It's what a normal student does but "more"
d. Time
i. Weekly participation is around 8-10 hours each week
ii. The experience of women who work and are chapter members
1. Upper-middle class students have difficulty relating and understanding this
2. Members are frustrated with them
3. Does the experience mean more?
iii. Involvement on campus is seen as crucial
B. Leveling the playing field
a. Greek membership masks economic inequalities
b. Join to have a certain image on campus – gives them an identity on campus
c. Some join because it is exclusive
C. Organizational Hierarchy
a. Fraternity Associations
b. Sorority Hierarchy
i. Top three and bottom three
1. Involvement
2. Social class is about the same across the top three
D. Tacit Knowledge
a. Knowing what to anticipate during recruitment
E. Recruitment
a. The recruitment face and the real face of the organization
b. Unintentional exclusion
c. Tactics the organization uses to promote a specific image
d. What is a target rushee?
i. Advantages of some members
ii. What the chapter looks for
iii. Importance of fit

Appendix K: Data Resources

Interview Data:
Two One-hour interviews with 14 chapter members
One one-hour interview with the chapter president
One one-hour interview with the institution's Greek advisor
One one-hour interview with the chapter advisor
Three one-hour interviews with Greek women outside of Rho Beta
A second, half-hour interview with 14 chapter members

Observational Data:
Attended two two-hour chapter meetings
Attended one two-hour chapter executive board meetings
Attended the two-hour annual Greek Sing
Attended one one-hour chapter dinner
Reviewed the Greek display cases in the University student activities center
The chapter house and its contents
Visited the off-campus home of a four Rho Beta women

Document Review:
The chapter creed (not the private oath that is part of ritual)
The chapter budget
The chapter Web page
One edition of the Greek newsletter published by the University Greek Life Office
The Greek Sing program
The institutional Greek life Web page
The annual Greek awards program
Chapter scrap books

Appendix L: Profiles of 14 Participants & Chapter President

Name	Years in Rho Beta	Ethnicity	Self-Reported Parent's Base Salary	Hours Worked Per Week	Have Taken Out Loans to Pay for School	Participated in Lessons	Traveled Abroad	ACT	Attended a Private High School	[+]Social Class Self-Identification	[+]Social Class
Elise	4	White	50000	10				32		2	3
Mandy	4	White	30000	33	Y		Y	31		2	1
Claire	4	White	70000	15				20	Y	3	4
Liz	3	White	200000	0		Y	Y	25		3	4
Stephanie	3	White	50000	15	Y	Y	Y	32		2	3
Lindsey	2	White	150000	15			Y	29		3	4
Kristen	2	White	50000	13	Y	Y		n/a	Y	2	3
Polly	2	White	70000	6				29		2	2
Gen	1	White	200000	5			Y	28		2	4
Madison	1	White	70000	0	Y	Y		25		2	3
Kate	1	White	70000	0				24		2	2
Katherine	1	Hispanic	100000	0	Y		Y	25		2	1
Melanie	1	White	70000	0		Y		32		3	2
Mindy	1	White	30000	0	Y		Y	29		3	3
President	3	White	100000	27			Y	24		3	4

[+] 1=Lower-middle class, 2= middle class, 3=upper-middle class, 4= upper class

Appendix M: Profiles of Participants Not Selected for Interviews
(Arranged by Social Class)

Name	Years in Rho Beta	Ethnicity	Self-Reported Parent's Base Salary	Hours Worked Per Week	Have Taken Out Loans to Pay for School	Participated in Lessons	Traveled Abroad	ACT	Attended Private High School	Class Self-Identification	[+]Social Class
Participant 16	3	White	200,000			Y	Y		Y	3	4
Participant 17	3	White	100,000	27			Y			3	4
Participant 18	3	White	100,000	14			Y		Y	3	4
Participant 19	3	White	100,000		Y				Y	3	4
Participant 20	3	White/Dominican	100,000	15		Y			Y	3	4
Participant 21	3	White	150,000	10		Y				2	4
Participant 22	2	White	50,000		Y	Y				3	4
Participant 23	2	White	100,000		Y	Y	Y	1		3	4
Participant 24	1	White	200,000	11						4	4
Participant 25	1	White	150,000	15	Y	Y	Y			3	4
Participant 26	1	White	150,000			Y				2	4
Participant 27	1	White	150,000	6		Y	Y		Y	4	4
Participant 28	4	White	150,000	20						3	3
Participant 29	4	White	70,000	20	Y	Y		1		3	3
Participant 30	4	White	100,000							2	3
Participant 31	2	White	150,000	10		Y	Y			3	3
Participant 32	2	White	100,000	2		Y	Y		Y	3	3
Participant 33	2	White	200,000	7					Y	4	3
Participant 34	2	White	70,000	13	Y			1		2	3
Participant 35	2	White	200,000	10		Y				4	3
Participant 36	2	White	100,000					1	Y	3	3
Participant 37	1	White	50,000		Y	Y				3	3
Participant 38	1	White	100,000			Y				2	3
Participant 39	1	White	100,000	10			Y	1	Y	2	3
Participant 40	1	White	100,000		Y		Y			3	3
Participant 41	1	White	30,000		Y	Y	Y			2	3
Participant 42	1	White	100,000	17					Y	3	3
Participant 43	1	White	100,000	20					Y	3	3
Participant 44	1	White	100,000				Y			3	3
Participant 45	1	White	150,000			Y	Y	1		2	3
Participant 46	1	White	70,000		Y	Y				3	3
Participant 47	4	White	70,000						Y	2	
Participant 48	3	White	70,000	10	Y		Y	1	Y	3	
Participant 49	2	White	100,000	7			Y			2	
Participant 50	1	White	70,000	15	Y		Y			2	
Participant 51	1	White	70,000	25	Y	Y	Y		Y	2	

Appendix N: Definitions of Social Class Provided by Members (stratified by social class)

Category	Social Class	Total
Used a classification	3 upper-class, 3 upper-middle class, 2 middle class, 2 lower-middle class	10
Associations	4 Upper-class, 2 upper-middle class, 2 middle class, 1 lower-middle class	9
Possessions	4 Upper-class, 2 upper-middle class, 1 middle class, 1 lower middle class	8
Lifestyle	4 Upper-class, 1 upper-middle class, 1 middle class, 1 lower-middle class	7
Education/Occupation	1 Upper-class, 1 upper-middle class, 1 middle class, 1 lower-middle class	4
Financial Burden	1 upper-class, 2 upper-middle class, 2 lower-middle class	5
Unsure	1 upper-middle class, 2 middle-class	3
Presentation	1 upper-class	1

Appendix O: Costs of Membership (Stratified by Social Class)

Category	Social Class	Total
T-shirts	4 upper-class, 1 upper-middle class, 2 middle class, 1 lower-middle class	8
Dues	2 upper-class, 1 lower-middle class	3
Social events	1 upper-class, 1 upper-middle class, 1 lower-middle class	3
Additional Costs	1 upper-middle class, 1 middle class, 2 lower-middle class	4
Fines	1 upper-class, 1 lower-middle class	2
Taking a Little Sister	1 middle-class, 1 lower-middle class	2
House Corporation Bills	1 upper-class, 1 upper-middle class	2
Expensive But Worth It	1 upper-middle class, 1 lower-middle class	2
Fundraising	1 upper class	1

Appendix P: Benefits of Chapter Membership (Stratified by social class)

Category	Social Class	Total
Academic support	5 upper-class, 3 upper-middle class, 1 middle class, 1 lower-middle class	10
Social resources	3 Upper-class, 3 upper-middle class, 2 middle class, 1 lower middle class	9
Helps you get a job	3 Upper-class, 2 upper-middle class, 2 middle class, 1 lower-middle class	8
Study files	2 Upper-class, 3 upper-middle class, 1 middle class, 1 lower-middle class	7
Alumni mentoring	2 Upper-class, 3 upper-middle class, 1 middle class	6
Networking	3 upper-class, 1 upper-middle class, 1 middle class, 1 lower-middle class	6
Helps you get involved	2 upper-middle class, 2 middle-class, 1 lower-middle class	5

Helen-Grace Ryan

EDUCATION

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
Ph.D. Higher Education & Student Affairs — November 2009

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
M.S. Higher Education & Student Affairs — May 2002

University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky
B.S. Business Economics, Magna Cum Laude — May 2000

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Dean of Students
Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky — August 2007 to Present

- Work collaboratively with the Student Life leadership team to provide direction, vision, and advocacy for the Division of Academic and Student Life
- Supervise the following functional areas: Campus Recreation, Counseling Center, Dining Services, Health Services, Residence Life, Students Activities, and Orientation

Project Associate – Center for Postsecondary Research
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana — July 2005 to August 2007

- Supported the operation of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administered at 500+ institutions with over 700,000 undergraduate participants annually
- Liaised with approximately 150 post-secondary institutions administering the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) and the Beginning College Student Survey of Engagement (BCSSE) assisting with survey administration and interpreting survey results

Associate Director – University Housing
Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky — July 2004 to July 2005

- Oversaw the operations of thirteen residence halls and assisted in the management of a department providing service to approximately 5000 residential students

PUBLICATIONS

Ahren, C, Ryan, H., McKinley, R. (2008). Assessment matters: The why and how of cracking open and using assessment results. *About Campus*, 13(2), 29-32.

Ahren, C., Ryan, H., Dosset, A. (2009). Making the familiar strange: How a culture audit can boost your advising impact. *About Campus*, 14(1), 25-32.